

SPIRITUALISM

AS SPIRITUALISTS HAVE WRITTEN OF IT

By
HERBERT V. O'NEILL

With a Preface by
THE MOST REVEREND
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DEDICATION

To

E. Gerald Stanley, Esq., to whom
I owe more than he can realise.

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FOREWORD

THIS little book owes its inception and publication to His Grace the Archbishop of Liverpool. Without his encouragement I would not have written it.

In order to anticipate the question likely to be put by possible Spiritualist readers, viz.: 'What can a Catholic priest, who is forbidden to attend séances, possibly know about Spiritualism?' I can state that I have enjoyed the friendship of leading Spiritualists and have corresponded in a friendly way with others, and have studied the subject closely for over thirty-five years.

A former editor of *The Two Worlds* (Mr. J. J. Morse) used to allow me unrestricted hospitality in the columns of that paper.

The late Mr. David Gow, formerly editor of *Light*, was a personal friend. He used to send me all the foreign Spiritualist publications received in his office—*Il Veltro*, *La Vie Mystérieuse*, *Psyché*, *Die Uebersinnliche Welt*, *Luce e Ombra*, *Pschische Studien*, *Le Courier Spirite Belge*, etc. We lunched together; and though in controversy we were utterly opposed we were friends. He wrote to me once that I 'fought with a clean rapier and was no cloak-and-dagger merchant.' At the time of his illness his wife wrote to me (in a letter I still possess, dated Jan. 9, 1936): 'I believe there are few people who have such a wide and deep knowledge of our subject.'

In another letter which I still treasure, the late veteran protagonist of Spiritualism in America, Dr. J. M. Peebles, wrote: 'Reading your writings, my dear Sir, I thought it probable you were a medium.'

These testimonials, so to speak, are proffered merely to show that I do not write 'without the book.'

If those Spiritualists who attack the Catholic Church would only give, I won't say one-half, but one-tenth the application to the study of *Catholic* text-books that I have given to Spiritualist teaching in English, American and Continental books and newspapers, I am fully convinced that they would alter their views completely.

HERBERT V. O'NEILL.

St. Joan of Arc,
Bootle,
Liverpool, 20.

Feast of the Apparition of St. Michael the Archangel, 1944.

PREFACE

BY

THE MOST REVEREND RICHARD DOWNEY, D.D., PH.D., LL.D.,
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NEARLY sixty years have elapsed since the Society for Psychical Research was founded, for the purpose, as it stated in its first manifesto, of making 'an organized and systematic attempt to investigate that large group of debatable phenomena designated by such terms as "mesmeric," "psychical," and "spiritualistic"'. Amongst its first investigators were Mr. Hereward Carrington, Mr. Bagally and the Hon. Everard Fielding. After years of patient and careful investigation the verdict of all three was unanimous as to the high percentage of 'psychic phenomena' produced by fraud and trickery. Mr. Carrington in his *Personal Experiences in Spiritualism* placed the percentage at 98, and no one suspects him of overstatement.

It is with the remaining 2 per cent. that we are here concerned. There are, so to speak, various schools of interpreters.

- (i) There are, first of all, the Naturalists and Rationalists who, relying on the uniformity of nature, with Browning, class all mediums with Sludge, who could 'play you twenty tricks miraculous.' From Podmore to Clodd there have been many who dismiss all psychical phenomena as 'sheer humbug.' But this robust school ignores the evidence. Carrington, Bagally and Fielding never hesitated to expose the frauds of Eusapia Palladino whenever they detected them, but they have put it on record that the result of séances held in their own rooms at a hotel in Naples, under the auspices of the Society for Psychical Research, was such as to convince all three that genuine psychical manifestations of a remarkable character had been obtained. (See *Proceedings*, S.P.R., vol. xxiii, pp. 309-596).
- (ii) At the opposite pole are those who roundly and *sans phrase* ascribe all spiritistic phenomena, not manifestly produced by fraud, to demoniacal agency. They seem to give the devil more than his due, and incidentally insult

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his angelic intelligence by crediting him with the appalling drivel churned out by modern mediums. There are other and more serious difficulties against this proposition. It has been pointed out by Greeley and other hostile critics of Spiritualism that 'spirit messages' have not infrequently brought about a reformation of life on the part of drunkards and libertines, and there are even instances of such communications leading their recipients to make submission to the Catholic Church. If these messages be from the devil, we can only say with Greeley that his Satanic Majesty's character has been much maligned, and that his biography ought to be rewritten. To say that in these instances the devil was throwing a sprat to catch a mackerel is gratuitous, and in any case hardly a satisfactory answer. Again, it is urged, that if the upholders of the out-and-out demoniacal theory were consistent they ought to attribute the safety of the sleepwalker in his perilous journeyings to angelic guidance. And finally, it is contended that the whole theory goes beyond the available evidence, that the conclusion is very much wider than the premises.

- (iii) Thirdly, there are the 'true believers' who regard Carrington's 2 per cent. of unexplained phenomena, and a good deal more of their own, as manifestations of discarnate spirits. Outside the ranks of Spiritualists this hypothesis is regarded as at least unproven.
- (iv) Amidst the din of contending parties the psychologist can hardly make himself heard. Yet he really has something of value to contribute to the discussion, if the disputants who emit more heat than light would only give him a hearing. It is surely to the experimental psychologist that one naturally turns for a scientific explanation of psychic phenomena. It is a sound principle to seek first for a natural explanation before having recourse to the preternatural. Is psychology really as bankrupt in explanation of psychical phenomena as Spiritualists would have us suppose?

Years ago Carrington pleaded for a laboratory in which psychical phenomena could be scientifically investigated. He argued: 'Until we can apply definite "laboratory methods" and study psychics by means of physical instruments far more delicate than

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our senses, it is probable that the present state of things will continue to exist ; but it is my firm belief that, were a laboratory fitted up with physical and electrical apparatus, suitable for this work, and if we could by their aid study a promising case of " psychic " or " mediumistic " phenomena, we should (within ten years or so) arrive at some definite conclusions. We should then know something about the laws and conditions under which telepathy, clairvoyance, telekenesis, etc., operate, and not until this is done, I believe, will such a positive conclusion be reached." (*Personal Experiences in Spiritualism*, p. 258). Much has been accomplished in this direction since these words were written. Mr. Harry Price succeeded in procuring laboratory tests which certainly brought no advantage to the Spiritualist cause. Again the result of a series of psychological tests applied to trance-mediums was to show that in no case did the medium in the trance-state rise above the mental level of his waking-state ; that his ' revelations ' were, as a matter of fact, nothing more than out-pourings from his dream-consciousness, or ' telepathic ' messages from more intelligent sitters.

The utterances of trance-mediums in general are largely explainable according to the ordinary psycho-analytic principles for the interpretation of dreams. Every dream, we are told, represents, in symbolic form, the fulfilment of a repressed wish ; and certainly the utterances of trance-mediums abound in instances of desires fulfilled. Because the medium in his waking-state wishes that there should be no hell and no suffering in ' the beyond,' the dream-consciousness asserts that there is none. Because Mr. Vale Owen, with the rest of us, was tired of the long spell of wet weather, his, or the medium's, dream-consciousness asserted that, though there are clouds, there is no rain in that wonderful heaven of his—a heaven, by the way, that is very obviously spun out of his own inner consciousness, so like is it to a glorified rectory standing in its own grounds. Because Sir Arthur Conan Doyle was an advocate of easier divorce his mediums very naturally assure him that ' on the other side ' spirits dwell in groups, but only ' affinized ' spirits are together, husbands and wives in many cases being astral miles apart. Because Sir Oliver Lodge was interested in physics his mediums tell him how bricks are manufactured in spirit-land, and how the essence of terrestrial clothes passes over and is woven into spirit-clothes on etherial looms. A spirit hypothesis of any kind seems hardly necessary to account for ' such stuff as dreams are made of.'

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But, it is contended, there is sterner stuff in trance-utterances. Of the sternest stuff Dr. Quackenbos writes in his remarkable book, *Body and Spirit*: 'The writer has never heard a spiritistic medium say anything that was not readily comprehensible on the theory of thought-transference. He has never seen a medium do anything that could not be rationally explained as due to the action of supersensible psychic force' (p. 277). There are many psychologists, such as the late Professor Münsterberg, who did not think it necessary to have recourse to the debatable theory of thought-transference in order to explain the phenomena. Münsterberg, after a careful scientific investigation of the case of Beulah Miller, came to the conclusion that she possessed the faculty of reading, not other people's minds, but other people's unpremeditated actions; in psycho-analytic jargon, she interrupted their motivations from the unconscious. Most professional mediums can very truthfully say with Sludge:

'I'm eyes, ears, mouth of me, one gaze and gape,
Nothing eludes me, everything's a hint.'

Years ago the celebrated psycho-analyst, Dr. Jung, advanced a psychological theory to account for ghostly apparitions. They are, according to him, entirely subjective—the result of a crisis in the internecine strife that goes on unceasingly deep down in the unconsciousness of each one of us between the ego-complex and the constellation of complexes around it and inimical to it. Thus, to take the case of Swedenborg. He was a hard-headed mathematician and his ego-complex bade him, in his own interests, keep to mathematics. But from his earliest years he had a 'mystical' complex which not infrequently asserted itself. The *Dictionary of General Biography* records how 'he then suffered from acute dyspepsia and an attack of temporary insanity,' after which period of unconscious psychological incubation, he had visions and conversed with the mighty dead of all ages, his chief visitants being poets and musicians. Clearly in his case, the repressed 'mystical' complex triumphed over the ego-complex and avenged its former repression by hallucinatory expression.

Of psychological theories purporting to account for abnormal psychical occurrences there is no end. But when the psychologist has had his say to the full, there remains a margin of admittedly unexplained psychical phenomena. To account for some of the marvels of the séance-room on psychological grounds is by no means to preclude the possibility of Satanic intervention.

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The Church has laid down some very definite theological principles relative to this matter. She teaches, on theological grounds, that spirits good and bad do exist, and that they are capable of entering into communication with man, subject to God's sanction—His positive permission in the case of good spirits, His toleration in the case of bad ones. What bad spirits have done once they can do again, and we know from the Gospels how the disciples cast out devils in Christ's name.

The evil effects, both physical and moral, of Spiritualism are admitted on all hands, and have been pointed out by psychologists, and even by investigators who regard Spiritualism as a gigantic system of fraud. Podmore, for instance, warns his readers that to take part in a séance may be to assist at a process of moral degradation. It is true, of course, that these evil effects may be explainable on physiological or psychological grounds, but they are of such a character as to constitute strong presumptive evidence of diabolic origin, and the Church, in the practical guidance of her children, acts on this presumption, at least hypothetically. Her condemnation of Spiritualism is simply a practical application of the theological principle that to hold communication with evil spirits is wrong. As to whether diabolic intervention takes place in any particular case the Church pronounces no judgment. That is a question of fact to be decided on the evidence. But whether in any particular case there be Satanic intervention or not makes no difference with regard to the culpability of attending the séance. The Catholic who attends does a thing which the Church in her wisdom has forbidden in the gravest possible manner. It is further to be noted that modern Spiritualism, ever since its introduction to this country in 1853, has taken the form of a religion, and a religion the basic tenet of which is directly subversive of the teaching of Christianity that the deposit of revealed truth was closed, once and for ever, with the death of the last Apostle. But, it may be asked, is not the prohibition of the Church a piece of mere ecclesiastical legislation which she might set aside in the light of subsequent scientific discovery? By no means. Her prohibition is tantamount to a formulation of divine positive law. The ceremonial law of the Old Testament has passed away, but not so the injunctions which refer to the natural law or the fundamental principles of religion. The prohibition, 'Neither let there be found among you anyone that . . . seeketh the truth from the dead.' (Deuteronomy xviii, 10, 11), has surely perpetual validity. Here is a divine categorical imperative proscribing any attempt at

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seeking truth from the dead, even though they died in the Lord. Though they may have died in the odour of sanctity intercourse with them is reserved to divine initiative. This is a point not generally grasped by Spiritualists who are continually citing apparitions of Our Lady and the saints in support of their creed. They ignore the all-important fact that these apparitions were not sought by the persons to whom they were vouchsafed; St. Bernardette, for instance, was astonished when Our Lady appeared to her: she was neither seeking nor expecting anything of the kind. The evoking of spirits by Spiritualists is quite another matter.

The Church's uncompromising attitude towards Spiritualism is not something new, called for, as it were, by the perils of our days. What but a most fierce condemnation of everything connected with Spiritualism could account for the amazing action of the Ephesians of whom we read in the Acts (xix, 19): 'and many of them who had followed curious arts brought together their books and burnt them before all. And, counting the price of them, they found the money to be 50,000 pieces of silver.' They made a bonfire to the value of some £2,500. A similar holocaust would hardly purge some of our large cities to-day.

Fr. O'Neill's book is particularly welcome at the present time which is witnessing a recrudescence of Spiritualism owing, on the one hand, to the desire of the bereaved for tangible assurance of the soul-survival of loved ones killed in the war and, on the other hand, to the less laudable desire of unscrupulous charlatans to make capital out of the mourners' longing and credulity. Fr. O'Neill has made a careful study of the whole subject over a great number of years, is conversant with the literature in most modern languages, and has had personal contact with many of the acknowledged leaders of the Spiritualist movement at home and abroad. He has, therefore, unique qualifications for giving to the public a comprehensive and up-to-date presentation of the cult in its varied ramifications. This little book is in itself a valuable *bureau de contestation* for the student and a safe guide to the man-in-the-street. It is free from the dullness of so many of the tomes on Spiritualism, and Fr. O'Neill is to be congratulated on his skilful selection of material and on his lightness of touch in dealing with it. He is admittedly critical, but his criticism is fair and honest and, above all, based on facts. Obviously much research has gone to the making of this informative volume.

I

'A WARNING TO ALL MEDIUMS'

DESPITE the agitation that is going on at the present time for the repeal of the law against fortune-telling, and the howls of indignation raised by Spiritualists at the prosecution of mediums, the words of the above heading are not taken from a police notice; nor are they the cry of some deceived heartbroken 'sitter' who has come away from a séance dispirited and disillusioned.

They form the heading to a leading article from the pen of the editor of *Psychic News*, in the issue of November 27, 1943.

My readers are asked to note that the warning is addressed not to a *few* mediums, nor to *some* mediums, but to 'ALL' mediums.

To my mind that leader, which we shall analyse later, is also a WARNING TO ALL WHO ARE TEMPTED TO CONSULT MEDIUMS.

To disabuse, disillusion and enlighten any who are inclined to think that there 'may be something' in Spiritualism is the purpose of this book.

The book is not intended as a study in Psychical Research. A study of that kind would need a very much larger volume than the *format* of this series of 'Present Day Problems' allows. What is aimed at is the presentation of such a case against Spiritualism that all Catholics at least will see for themselves how hollow, how fraudulent, how contradictory a movement it is, and thereby be deterred from having anything to do with it.

In the attempt to convince possible non-Catholic readers, as well as Catholics, the damning evidence against Spiritualism will be provided by quotations from the writings of non-Catholic investigators of Spiritualistic phenomena and from the admissions, as to fraud and unsatisfactoriness, made by Spiritualists themselves.

At the moment of penning these words not only Spiritualist newspapers, but others (like *The Leader*) are excitedly concerned over the prosecution of mediums by the police. Such prosecu-

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tions are quite justified. The behaviour of many present-day mediums is most heartless, consciously cruel and abominable to the extreme. By fraud and wholesale deception they are battenning on the sorrows and miseries of the anxious and the bereaved. They are lying for money, indifferent to the pain they may cause. And they know it.

As in the last Great War, so in this one. The harvest of Death grows day by day on the fields of battle. Death is no gleaner. Each sweep of his scythe means a household in mourning and many a widow and many a fatherless child. There are countless sad hearts in the world to-day. What wonder, then, if the thoughts of the nations are turned to the problem of the life beyond the grave.

There are other hearts that are troubled too ; the hearts of those who have received the laconic message : ' Missing.'

The genuine Christian has learned from Christ to say, in his hour of Gethsemane : ' Thy Will be done.' The dead, he knows, are in the keeping of their Maker. But the mourner who has no true Christian faith has little other consolation but to nurse his grief.

To such as these last the claims of Spiritualism, with its alleged promise of communication with the dead, offer a solace which some of them do not refuse.

Do they all get the solace ? Do they all get the promised information ? Or do they rather find, as Stainton Moses put it, that ' it is extremely difficult to get anything like definite and precise facts plainly put ' ?

The answer is supplied by *Psychic News*. The leader referred to above is headed :

' A WARNING TO ALL MEDIUMS.'

As stated already, it is a warning not to a *few* mediums, nor to some mediums, but to *all* mediums.

It begins :

' Some of our mediums are unwittingly performing a disservice to Spiritualism. They are confronted with harassed people who, in the absence of official information, yearn for news of loved ones in the Services described as " missing." . . .

' Perplexed readers tell of contradictory messages from mediums, some averring that these " missing men " have passed on, others declaring that they are still on earth and will return to their homes. . . .

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'In view of these circumstances, *mediums are warned against raising the hopes of anxious sitters. Truth and frankness, in the end, are the best guides*, even if it means disappointing those who cling to the hope that their loved ones are not "dead."

'No service is rendered by raising expectations that will be dashed to the ground. In times of difficulty when nearly all the odds are against successful spirit communication, it is best to be cautious.'

Those are the words of the editor of what is claimed to be 'The Spiritualist Newspaper with the World's Largest Net Sale.'

An analysis of the 'Warning' establishes the purpose of this chapter, viz. the *uselessness* of the alleged messages. More, it gives away the fact that the 'messages' are NOT from the spirit world, but are the medium's own concoction; hence the declaration: 'Truth and frankness, in the end, are the best guides, even if it means disappointing those who cling to the hope that their loved ones are not "dead."'

So that, in addition to the admission that 'in times of difficulty . . . nearly all the odds are *against* successful spirit communication' we are presented with the further admission that some mediums are liars.

There you have the callous, open admission, by the editor of 'The Spiritualist Newspaper with the World's Largest Net Sale,' that mediums are not all honest.

His 'warning' makes plain that these mediums to whom his leader is addressed (and he addresses it to ALL) are practising this deception consciously. They know they are telling lies. That is why he writes 'mediums are warned against raising the hopes of anxious sitters'; that is why he states that '*truth and frankness, in the end, are the best guides*'; that is why he ends with the advice: 'it is best to be cautious.'

Now, if the mediums concerned were in a genuine trance when delivering these lying messages there would be no sense in issuing the warning; or if they were genuinely receiving those deceiving communications from the spirit-world there would still be no need for the warning: a medium in a state of trance is not directly responsible for his or her words or actions whilst in the trance; and if the message *really* was communicated by a 'spirit' the medium could disclaim all responsibility for the inaccurate utterance. But because the writer of the warning leader knows perfectly well that the 'messages' are fraudulent he feels called upon to issue a word of advice to the culprits concerned.

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In that leading article there is not a trace of sympathy for the sorrowing 'harassed people' who are deceived, nor is there any condemnation of the heartless deception practised; all the editor is concerned with is the 'disservice to Spiritualism.' One is led to wonder would even that warning have been issued if the police had not been busy rounding up some of these shameless mediums.

Is it from characters such as these that the anxious and the bereaved really hope to receive the truth about the fate of the missing and the killed?

The lesson to be learned from the newspaper article in question bears out the character of Spiritualist 'messages' which they have borne since modern Spiritualism began. It is a long story of unfulfilled promises, fantastic claims, dubious phenomena and lying messages. The only thing to be said in its favour is that it has led a few blank materialists to a belief in the existence and survival of the human soul. The late Mr. David Gow, formerly editor of *Light*, a man whose friendship I shared, made that confession to me—viz. that Spiritualist phenomena broke down his agnosticism and led him to believe that there was a life after death. For Spiritualism as a religion he had no use. Robert Blatchford made a similar confession. Dennis H. Bradley took the same attitude.

But, a reader might ask, does not the fact that Spiritualism has led people to a belief in a future life justify people in practising it?

In reply to that question I may be pardoned for quoting from that most entertaining and instructive book, my favourite bedside book, *Sanctions*, by Mgr. Ronald A. Knox. In the chapter 'Against the Stream' that very question is discussed by an agnostic doctor who is a psycho-analyst, and by a Catholic and others.

One of the characters, Lady Maud Sanquhar, has confessed her belief that Spiritualism provides positive evidence for immortality.

'There was an awkward pause. Most people present knew that Lady Maud had a weakness for Spiritualism, and also that her husband disapproved of it. It was not often that the influence of these beliefs made itself felt in public. At last the crisp voice of Dr. Donovan intervened:

"Of course, we don't want to destroy any reasonable conviction that anyone has. We are out to reach the truth, not to obscure it. But for that very reason we are bound to attack every false basis of belief, even though the belief itself should be true.

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Nothing does more harm, does it, than belief based on wrong grounds? Well, what I mean to say is, we ought not to assume the presence of any supernatural agency in so-called 'occult' manifestations until we know more, a great deal more, about the secrets of the subconscious. How do we know that persons present at a séance, even if they are honestly trying to make their minds a blank, do not subconsciously project their own thoughts into the medium? . . ."

"And so," answered Lady Maud, "for the sake of a scientific theory, you would take away from us what is to so many of us our only hope of seeing our dead again, the only thing that makes life worth living? I lost two brothers in the war, Dr. Donovan, and I should lose them again, this time irretrievably, if I could believe what you say."

There was another pause. . . . Dr. Donovan was a kindly man, and felt incapable of answering the outburst. Only Kaloczy at last found voice to speak:

"We must not believe a lie, Lady Maud. We must not believe a lie, even if all the light of our hopes dies with the dawning of the truth."

That attitude of Lady Maud's was expressed by one of the witnesses for the defence in the recent trial of Mrs. Helen Duncan. She said: 'Spiritualism is my religion. You can't trick me on these things. The whole of my life would feel it was at an end if I found I had been tricked' (Portsmouth *Evening News*, March 29, 1944).

To that witness the words also apply: we should not believe a lie.

Now, modern Spiritualism, like Selfridge's Stores, was ushered into the world with a great trumpeting. Even from the first year of its coming into being, that is in 1848, the world was told that Spiritualism meant the 'dawning of a new era.'

Leah Fox, who made this first great announcement, was followed by many others who also proclaimed a transformation of the earth; but in spite of the echoing chorus in which Judge Edmonds and others of the early days took up the refrain of Leah Fox's anthem—only to be followed in our own days by Sir Oliver Lodge, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Mr. Dennis Bradley and a host of unidentifiable 'spirit guides'—the nearest approach to a 'transformation' is the latest type of 'transfiguration séance' to be witnessed—as the Spiritualist advertisements tell us—at Golders Green and Forest Lane.

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'Brilliant minds with brilliant thoughts,' we were told, were 'burning to give utterance to earth.' And we wait in vain.

A hundred years almost have passed since the first trumpetings of Spiritualism sounded, and not a single 'brilliant thought' has reached us yet. As for the 'brilliant minds,' well, Professor C. E. M. Joad disposes of them by saying: 'One is driven to the conclusion that, even if ghosts have souls, they certainly have no brains.'

The 'great and astounding manifestations' promised for 1855, for 1921, for 1926, have proved a failure. They have not materialised.

So much for the trumpeted prophecies of their 'New Revelation.' What are we to say of the *private* messages?

Were I to give my personal opinion alone with regard to the value of private messages conveyed through professional mediums there would be the usual outcry of 'Roman Catholic intolerance' and 'Roman monopoly of miracles'; so, as a foundation for my own judgment, I quote here only the opinions and verdicts of authorities whom no Spiritualists can accuse of *parti-pris*, viz. non-Catholic researchers in psychical studies, and Spiritualists themselves.

Let me begin with the statements of the Rev. Stainton Moses, known also as 'M.A., Oxon.'

The Rev. Stainton Moses was for a while a clergyman of the Church of England, and an M.A. of Oxford University. From the time he became a convert to Spiritualism, through the phenomena of automatic writing, till his death he spent his days in defence of his new belief. He was the first President of the London Spiritualist Alliance, and he was for a number of years the editor of *Light*, which claims to be (Mr. Barbanell must not take this too much to heart) 'the acknowledged representative of cultivated and intelligent Spiritualism throughout the world, everywhere quoted and referred to as such.'

The Rev. Mr. Moses wrote two important books: *Spirit Identity* and *Higher Aspects of Spiritualism*. He himself declares in his *Spirit Identity* that whereas he wrote previously 'for the uninstructed world' 'here on the contrary I am speaking to the esoteric body' and 'speaking only to such' (p. 1). That is, he wrote his book for Spiritualists.

Another important declaration of his occurs in the preface (p. vi) of his second book, *Higher Aspects*: 'I protest that Spiritualism . . . is not the silly thing that its friends (alas!) too often depict it as being.'

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Now we have the reverend gentleman's credentials: Church of England clergyman converted to Spiritualism; a Master of Arts of the University of Oxford; a zealous defender of the cause of Spiritualism, and 'all out' to purify the movement.

And what has he to say with regard to these private 'spirit messages'?

He is discussing in *Spirit Identity* 'The Nature of the Intelligence' that provides the messages. He asks: 'Is the Intelligence human?' and states that 'Several suspicious circumstances combine to throw doubt upon particular cases.'

'The free use of names great and honoured amongst men is one of the most suspicious.' He adds: 'Another cause of doubt is the extreme difficulty that is usually found in getting any facts precisely given, especially facts that are certainly external to the knowledge of the sitters' (p. 31).

Let the enquirer who is anxious to know the fate of someone posted by the War Office as 'missing' ponder those words. The medium does not know what the War Office does not know: the enquirer herself does not know—therefore there is, on the admission of a leader of Spiritualist thought, 'extreme difficulty' in getting the information that is sought.

Let all persons who may be tempted to consult mediums as to the fate of their men-folk engaged in the war ponder also these further quotations:

'Another cause which has strengthened the inherent feeling of improbability with which most of us start, is the mass of contradictions in the messages' (p. 35).

In his other book—*Higher Aspects of Spiritualism*—referring to public séances, he says the 'spirits' who manifest 'are beings who are not possessed of high moral consciousness. Whether they are instruments in the hands of more progressed intelligences or not, the fact remains that they can give no trustworthy information' (p. 18).

Seventy pages further on he makes a more detailed charge against such 'messages': 'Furthermore, it is a common cause of complaint amongst us that the communications received . . . are of an unsatisfactory nature. It is said that they are frequently trivial, contradictory, foolish (if not worse), and not such as to command respect. . . . I am anxious not to overstate the argument. . . . Is it not so? I am disposed to think it is' (p. 88).

Referring again to the public séances, Mr. Moses adds, two pages further on: 'A medium is a charlatan, an impostor, who produces

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one's grandmother for five shillings, a noxious and elusive wild beast, to be crushed and trampled out! Yes, I am aware of it. *Hinc illae lachrymae*. It is for this reason that our circles are crowded with phenomena at best equivocal, too often apparently or really fraudulent. It is for this reason that we have such cause to blush for the puerilities and imbecilities, the frauds and tricks that are perpetually being brought to light' (p. 90).

Now if a Catholic were to have made those statements 'off his own bat' there would have arisen a chorus of protests in the Spiritualist press. There would have been no end to the questions in retort as to whether the author of the charges had ever been present at a séance, etc., etc., etc.; so how could he know anything about it? 'Bigotry,' 'Intolerance,' 'Methods of the Inquisition,' and the usual litany of abuse.

I doubt if even a Catholic would refer to fraudulent mediums as 'noxious and elusive wild beasts to be crushed and trampled out.'

Conan Doyle said of such mediums; 'Every fake medium should get at least ten years in prison' (Letter to Samri Frikell: *Spirit Mediums Exposed*, p. 10).

Nor is the Rev. Stainton Moses alone in making such charges and admissions. The *Lyceum Manual*, which is the official text-book 'for use in Progressive Lyceums connected with British Spiritualistic Societies' and which is published under the aegis of the British Spiritualists' Lyceum Union, warns the learners that not all messages are to be trusted.

In section 140, on 'Mediumship,' the Conductor of the Lyceum puts the question: 'Has the medium any influence on the phenomena?' And the answer given is: 'Yes, every medium has a personality more or less positive, and all communications are coloured more or less thereby; subtle differences in the organism cause variety in the manifestations. Spirit power is limited in expression by the organism through which it works.'

In answer to the question 'Do mediums exhibit any peculiarity?' the reply is: 'Yes, waywardness of character, and a disposition to be too easily influenced by surrounding circumstances or persons, but the broadest charity should be bestowed upon them as they are often left in such a negative state as to become the prey of conflicting influences.'

In the next section (§ 141), on 'Spiritual Gifts,' which are 'the manifestations of Spirit Friends to prove their presence and immortality,' it is asked: 'Are all Spirit messages to be relied

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on?' To that the Lyceum answer in chorus: 'No; we must test, prove, and try them in order to ascertain the truth.'

Well, Spiritualists may be able to 'test, prove and try' the lying messages given by mediums with regard to those reported as 'missing' in this war, but for the life of me I can't see how they are to set about it. Even the editor of *Psychic News* admits that 'The well-known' (the well-known, mark you) 'spirit guides are unanimous in affirming that they are confronted with overwhelming difficulties in spirit communication these days,' and he adds that 'In times of difficulty . . . nearly all the odds are against successful spirit communication' (Nov. 27, 1943, p. 4).

To crown all these damning admissions we have the statement of 'Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.'

Manifesting from the spirit world on Tuesday, October 7, 1930 (three months after he had 'passed over'), through the mediumship of Mrs. Eileen Garrett, 'he' spoke for a long time with Mr. Harry Price at a séance held in the National Laboratory of Psychical Research. In reply to the question, put by Mr. Price: 'Is it possible for you to know if some of the mediums are genuine, or partly genuine, or some wholly fraudulent?' the doughty champion of Spiritualism replied: 'There is not a medium in the world, from what I know now, that is able to get a clear admission into our life' (*Leaves from a Psychist's Case-Book*, p. 113).

With such admissions made by Spiritualists themselves there is, perhaps, scarcely need to add further evidence of the worthlessness of spirit messages, but two or three quotations from experienced psychical researchers may not come amiss.

First, there are the statements of Professor Sir William Barrett, who was one of the earlier Presidents of the Society for Psychical Research which was founded in 1882.

Professor Barrett wrote a very interesting book entitled *Psychical Research*. In it he refers, regretfully, to 'the impossibility of securing the complete passivity of the mind of the medium,' and to 'the all but total impossibility of transcending the limitations imposed by the medium's mental apparatus and intellectual equipment' (p. 240). 'We must also allow likewise,' he adds, 'for the possibility, if not probability, of other still more baffling impediments, unimaginable by us in our ignorance of what the conditions are in the spirit-world' (p. 242).

Professor James H. Hyslop, Ph.D., LL.D., first President of the American Society for Psychical Research, a man who spent

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many years in investigating Spiritualist phenomena, also refers to the 'baffling impediments, unimaginable by us' of Sir William Barrett, only, after the fashion of Americans who describe undertakers as 'morticians,' he terms them, ponderously, 'intercosmic obstacles.' He writes of 'The triviality and confusion of the messages,' and goes on to say that: 'The limitations of the messages are due to the conditions affecting the possibility of any communication at all. It is an abnormal state in the living that conditions the access of knowledge from beyond, and there is evidence that similar difficulties often encounter the efforts of those who have passed before to penetrate the veil. Besides there are probably intercosmic obstacles to ready communication, and when we add to these manifold complications in the mental world affecting any access of outside influences at all, we may well imagine that abnormal conditions on both sides would, like deliria, give us only fragmentary knowledge. A series of facts will make this clear to all who care to think' (*Enigmas of Psychical Research*, p. 388).

Professor E. E. M. Joad, who has attended séances held under test conditions with some of the most noted mediums—mediums whose performances have attracted the attention of learned men of to-day, asks in his book *Guide to Modern Thought* (p. 154): 'Do the messages convey information which could not conceivably have been accessible to any person other than the person who has "passed over"?' It may be admitted at once that proof that such information had in fact been conveyed would be difficult to establish.'

Regarding 'the general nature of the communications received from "spirits" purporting to describe the conditions under which they exist,' he says: 'These have two general characteristics; they are platitudinous and trivial, and almost invariably they reproduce the general culture, outlook and ideas of the medium and of those sitting with the medium . . . they embody no other material other than what might have been supplied by the imagination of the living persons concerned' (pp. 155-156).

This 'disposition to be too easily influenced by surrounding circumstances or persons' is borne out by Continental Spiritualists also. Frau Maria Von Bergen, the representative of Swedish Spiritualists, emphasised the point very strongly. 'The different spirit communications vary, especially in these days, almost infinitely. One message contradicts another so directly at times that it is impossible to harmonise them. Besides, we may never

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be able to judge, most probably, how far the subconscious mind of the medium plays a part in these messages. . . . Hence the deplorable confusion, the agonising discord, and the tragic diversity of opinion that reign to-day.’

Mme Thérèse Darel, of Geneva, one of ‘the most illustrious and greatest names in the study of Spiritualism,’ also stresses this further point: ‘You have learnt by experience,’ she says, ‘that the dead are no different from what they were when they were alive . . . in their new condition they remain finite entities and, in consequence, imperfect; their knowledge is limited, as limited as are the possibilities extended to them of manifesting and establishing contact with the living’ (Congress Report, p. 14).

Here is the situation to-day: thousands of anxious, harassed, heartbroken women—mothers or wives or fiancées—are rushing to consult predatory, lying mediums, mediums who have to be warned that ‘truth is best in the end.’ These anxious women, who know no better, seek from heartless harridans information as to their loved ones who are dead or missing, and that at a time when prominent leaders of the Spiritualist movement feel constrained to declare that the possibility of getting genuine and truthful information is well-nigh impossible. ‘In times of difficulty’—like the present—‘nearly all the odds are against successful spirit communication.’

Strangest of all, in a sense, is the fact that whilst these marvellous (é) mediums profess to be able to give information about soldiers, sailors and airmen who are missing or dead they fail repeatedly to secure warnings from the ‘spirits’ when the clients who consult them are from the police!

So much for the situation in general; let us now enter a little into detail.

II

IS SPIRITUALISM A RELIGION ?

At the second International Spiritualist Congress, held in Geneva in 1913 (of which more will be said later), Mr. E. W. Wallis, then editor of *Light*, represented the London Spiritualists' Alliance. In his address on May 13 he said : ' Spiritualism is the result of the action of beings from the next world (*des entités de l'au-delà*) on men here below (*sur l'homme d'ici-bas*) in their attempt to come to his assistance. [I quote and translate from the full report, which was published in French.]

' The beings from the next world are neither angels nor devils, they are human beings (applause) ; consequently what they tell us stands at the bar of our own judgment (*doit être jugé par notre propre raison*). Consequently it depends upon us to decide whether the messages we receive from beyond the grave are true or not ' (p. 183).

Very well, let us put some of those messages at the bar of human reason.

We have seen in the preceding chapter sufficient to make us question the *bona fides* of any medium. Spiritualists themselves have given us enough justification for doubting the good faith of the instruments through whom the messages are conveyed.

I know perfectly well that I shall be accused of bigotry for attacking Spiritualism. I shall be told that it is most unchristian to attack anybody's religious belief. But : IS SPIRITUALISM A RELIGION ?

Spiritualism *has* been offered to the world as a religion, a ' New Revelation.' Not only is it to be considered a religion but the claims are advanced for it that it is to be the handmaid of Christianity, though some Spiritualists go so far as to assert that it is to supplant Christianity and be the ' Universal Religion.'

It was the late Sir Arthur Conan Doyle who described it as ' The New Revelation '—a very brave title to use seeing that

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there is nothing *new* in attempting to make contact with the dead, and that the *revelations* of Spiritualism do not contain a single iota of credible information beyond the fact that the soul survives after the death of the body: we are presented instead with the ancient pagan ideas of Reincarnation, or else with a description of a materialised heaven that few people would want to inhabit.

The *Lyceum Manual* issued by the British Spiritualists' Lyceum Union seems to be undecided as to what form of religion Spiritualism shall be. It has sections bearing the headings 'The Religion of Humanity' (an idea common with some continental Spiritualists); 'The Religion of Health' (in common with Nudists and the Mazdaznan believers); 'The Religion of Use' (or the expansion of Science for the benefit of society).

Spiritualist weekly publications advertise 'Sunday Services' by the score, and call their meeting-places 'churches' or (after the French and Belgian style) 'temples.'

So it *must* be a Religion.

But is it?

One after another of the accredited leaders of Spiritualism tells us that it is a religion, but a religion without *dogmas* or *creeds*.¹

Of course the obvious retort to that statement is the question: Can there be any religion without dogma or creed? And the answer is: No.

If we ask Spiritualists does not their religion *teach anything*, they reply at once: Of course it does; it teaches the spirituality of the soul, its immortality, and the possibility of communicating with it after death.

There, straightaway, you have 'dogma'—'dogma' means 'what is held,' 'what is believed,' 'tenet.'

When the Spiritualist says he has no creed, he again betrays his ignorance of the meaning of the words he uses. A 'creed' merely means 'an expression of one's beliefs.' So when we find in the *Lyceum Manual* (§ 136): 'What is the creed of Spiritualism?' followed by the answer:

'Spiritualists have no creed, but mostly unite in affirming the following simple summary of principles:

'The Fatherhood of God.

The Brotherhood of Man.

The Immortality of the Soul, and its personal characteristics.

¹ *Psychic News* printed in a panel over the heading of its leading article: "Our allegiance is not to a Creed, not to a Book, not to a Church, but to the Great Spirit of Life and to His eternal natural laws."—A spirit message.

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The Proven Facts of Communion between departed Human Spirits and Mortals.

Personal Responsibility, with Compensation and Retribution hereafter for all the good or evil deeds done here.

And a path of Eternal Progress open to every human soul that wills to tread it by the path of eternal good '—there you have a creed.

Prefix the words: 'I believe in' to each of those statements, or articles, and you have the Spiritualists' creed.

Hence all the talk of religion without dogmas and without a creed is sheer flapdoodle.

What they really mean to say is that they have no true Christian beliefs. Those who do accept Spiritualism as a religion deny the Divinity of Christ and reject nearly all His teaching: original sin; the need for repentance; the Atonement; the value of Christ's death on Calvary; His Church and His sacramental system.

Let us take, for example, the anti-Christian ideas set forth by some of the English-speaking leaders or authorities of Spiritualism.

Despite the fact that the New Testament is full of references to the Fall of Man through the original sin of our first parents, we find the Rev. William Stainton Moses, formerly a clergyman of the Church of England, defying the Sacred Scriptures and declaring that Spiritualists 'reject as a baseless figment the story of a fall from *primaeval* innocence and perfection . . . in the person of Adam and Eve' (*Higher Aspects*, p. 62).

Hence if there was no Fall of Man there was no need for the Redemption and Atonement by our Saviour Jesus Christ. The Agony of Christ in the garden of Gethsemane, His trial before Annas and Caiaphas and Pilate and Herod, His suffering at the hands of the myrmidons of all these four—buffeting, mockery, scourging, crowning with thorns—His *Via Dolorosa* to Calvary with the climax of His Crucifixion . . . all this was, in the opinion of thousands of Spiritualists, sheer unnecessary suffering and a waste of life.

So we find the Rev. W. Stainton Moses, writing for Spiritualists, declaring with no little emphasis: 'The idea of a good God sacrificing His sinless son as a propitiation for man is repudiated as monstrous' (*Higher Aspects*, p. 78).

And that is the kind of teaching which Mr. E. W. Wallis, a former editor of *Light* ('the acknowledged representative of cultivated and intelligent Spiritualism throughout the world'),

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described as 'the highest form of Protestantism' (*Deuxième Congrès Spirite Universel*, p. 153).

These people, then, would share with Mr. H. G. Wells the idea that the Cross of Christ is a 'shameless symbol'; if not shameless, at least useless and unmeaning.

To such the lesson of the supreme sacrifice of Jesus Christ on Calvary is of little account. They could scarcely be expected to understand that in His crucifixion Jesus exemplified His own saying: 'Greater love hath no man than that he lay down his life for his friend.' They seem not to realise that the Cross of Christ has been adopted ever since, even in this Protestant country, as the symbol (surely not a 'shameless symbol,' Mr. Wells?) of supreme sacrifice—hence the *Victoria Cross*, the *Royal Red Cross*, the *Military Cross*, the *Distinguished Flying Cross*—and the little wooden crosses on the graves of Flanders, France, Gallipoli, Mesopotamia (in the last war), and El Alamein, Tobruk, and in Tunis, Sicily, Burma and a dozen other places in this war.

Can't these people see that Calvary counts? Or would they have the little wooden crosses, so pathetic, so revealing, replaced by stakes as though to mark the burial place of vampires?

Readers who profess to be true Christians and believers in the Bible are asked to compare the statements of Spiritualist authorities with what they know to be the traditional Christian teaching:

'The miracles (so-called) that attest the truth of the Bible story in the Old and New Testaments are well-nigh worthless to science' (*Higher Aspects*, p. 72-73).

'Man can have no saviour outside himself' (*Higher Aspects*, p. 78).

Spiritualism 'denies the immoral and soul-corrupting doctrine of any vicarious atonements for sin, and on the testimony of millions of immortal spirits, solemnly affirms that every guilty soul must arise and become its own saviour' (*Lyceum Manual*, § 136).

'There can be no miracle or supernatural event, as law reigns supreme in the spiritual as well as in the physical realm' (*Lyceum Manual*, § 138).

Spiritualism 'asks no pardon for its sins' (*Lyceum Manual*, § 142).

As a final contrast between the dogmas of Spiritualism and those of true Christianity let me oppose two passages—one from the New Testament and one from *The Letters of a Living Dead*

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Man. This latter book, by the way, has been described as the best of all spirit communications.

'And when they were come to the place which is called Calvary, they crucified Him there ; and the robbers, one on the right hand and the other on the left . . . and one of the robbers who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying : If Thou be the Christ, save Thyself and us.

'But the other answering, rebuked him, saying : Neither dost thou fear God, seeing thou art under the same condemnation. And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds ; but this man hath done no evil.

'And he said to Jesus : Lord, remember me when Thou shalt come into Thy Kingdom.

'And Jesus said to him : Amen, I say to thee, this day shalt thou be with Me in paradise ' (St. Luke xxiii, 33-43).

That incident put the crowning touch to the lesson contained in the parable of the Prodigal Son. It has proved an incentive to final repentance for possibly millions of sinners.

In contrast, what do alleged spirit-messages tell us ?

'Beware of death-bed repentance and its after-harvest of morbid memories. It is better to go into eternity with one's Karmic burdens bravely carried upon the back rather than slink through the back door of hell in the stockinged feet of a sorry cowardice ' (*Letters of a Living Dead Man*).

So Jesus Christ, for these Spiritualists, ceases to be the loving Redeemer. His Crucifixion was 'monstrous' waste of life. His miracles, to which He appealed so frequently, count for nothing. Final repentance is useless, since sin is only a 'Karmic burden' to be 'bravely carried upon the back.'

And this Spiritualism is the Key to the Bible and the Handmaid of Christianity !

This book is not intended to be a study in Psychical Research, but an examination of the claims of Spiritualism viewed especially in the light of the teachings of accredited Spiritualists.

Unfortunately Spiritualism is accepted by thousands in this country as a definite form of religion. Whether it should be so designated formed a very hotly debated question at the international Spiritualist Congress held in Geneva in 1913. The full report of that Congress makes very curious reading. For one thing, it shows how markedly insular and provincial is the attitude of English Spiritualists.

The insularity of the people of England—I speak not only of

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the masses, or the ' bourgeoisie,' or ' the man in the street '—is sometimes astounding. In matters affecting religion it would seem to be the obstacle to the conversion of England.

To the mind of the writer the limit was reached on an occasion when, in Ramsey, I.O.M., a revivalist preacher entered on a discussion regarding the Holy Eucharist. An attempt was made to try to bring home to him the difference between two Greek words *σαρξ* and *σωμα* used in regard to the doctrine of the Real Presence. The effort was fruitless : the good revivalist promptly retorted that there was no need to quote any foreign languages, as ' the Bible came down from heaven written in English.'

I bade him good-night, and thenceforth talked with him no more. My one reflection was : ' God help the poor souls left to the care of such masters in Israel.'

But to apply the lesson. One would expect that since the Fox happenings at Hydesville in 1848 the teachings of Spiritualism would have been synthesized by now. Instead, one finds the most hopeless confusion as to the value and aim of Spiritualism. It would seem that the leaders of the movement themselves realised the need for a definite platform, for they held their ' Second Universal Spiritist Congress ' in Geneva in 1913 to discuss this very question.

There were present at the Congress their most prominent members from England, France, Switzerland, Holland, Spain, the U.S.A., Brazil, Denmark, Italy, Mexico, Sweden, Monaco, Portugal, Croatia, Germany, Canada and Austria. In addition to two official representatives from Belgium, M. le Chevalier le Clément de St. Marcq represented his own unofficial following. He claimed to represent Belgian Spiritualists, despite the fact that 35 out of 37 *Fédérations Spirites* of Belgium disowned him because of his obscene and blasphemous brochure *Histoire de l'Eucharistie*. There was some friction over his presence, but harmony was restored.

Then M. Léon Denis (France), one of the three acting Presidents, announced the subject for the first day's debate : ' The Rôle of Spiritualism in the Religious Evolution of Humanity.'

The subject was divided into three questions for discussion :

1. Is Spiritualism the universal scientific religion ?
2. What connection or relation is there between Spiritualism and the other existing religions of the day ?
3. Can Spiritualism develop into a mode of worship ?

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There were other questions for discussion on other days of the Congress sittings, but they do not concern us in this chapter.

The debate really developed into trying to decide whether Spiritualism was a religion *at all*. To the non-Spiritualist it seems surely strange that such a question should need discussion after three-quarters of a century. The early Christians did not wait nearly a century to find out whether their new faith was a religion or not. Not only did they know it before they were baptised, but the Jewish priests knew it and the pagan emperors of Rome knew it. It was precisely because it was a new religion, a religion that was intolerant of any other religion, that it was proscribed and its adherents were persecuted and put to death.

Hence when we find that the members of the Congress could not decide on the question Catholics may be excused if they refuse to accept it as such. The most that can be said for it is that it is an attempt to prove, by demonstration, the truth of a dogma which Christianity has always taught, viz. that there is a life after death.

That view is upheld also by the editor of *The Occult Review*. Commenting on the renewed debate in *Light* as to 'whether Spiritualism is a religion,' he says: 'The admitted business of Spiritualism being to demonstrate the life of the soul after death, if it does succeed in this, it is a priceless adjunct to religion, but it is not religion itself, the concern of which is not evidence of immortality but evidence that there is a possible and attainable state of union between man and God' (*Occult Review*, Jan. 1917).

It would take far too long to summarise all the views expressed at the Congress. One can give a translation of only some of them.

The first speaker was Mme Darel, of Geneva. She said: 'If Spiritualism is to be a religion, who are going to be the means of revelation of the new religion? According to you, it will be the spirits of the dead. Now, all your experience has taught you that the dead are not any way different from what they were when they were on earth. . . . The dead in their new conditions are finite entities, and consequently they are imperfect; their knowledge is limited, and so are the possibilities limited of their getting into communication with us' (p. 14). She goes on to say that the messages they give are of little value, with no guarantee that they do come from the dead. 'It is useless, ladies and gentlemen, to ask them to give proofs of their identity.' (Poor Sir Oliver and poor Sir Arthur!) 'You wish to found a Scientific Religion; let me propose instead "The Scientific Study of Spirit Phenomena."'

The next speaker was a Jewish rabbi, M. Alfred Bénézech. He

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admitted that we can believe in a future life without becoming Spiritualists. He gave as a reason for the opposition of Christian Churches to Spiritualism the texts of the Bible that condemn necromancy. But he, good Jew, will accept in the Bible only what suits him : ' If, some three thousand years ago, communication between the living and the dead was forbidden, well, I, for my part, do not hold myself bound to obey ' (p. 20).

Laughter greeted his sally of contemptuous reference to the ' Church's monopoly of miracles ' at Lourdes and La Salette. He ended by appealing for Spiritualism to maintain at all times a critical and scientific character.

The rabbi was followed by a Frenchman, M. Vallabrègue. ' Every religious founder is a medium. Whether we like it or not, the Sacred Scriptures are spirit writings.' Confucius, Mahomet, St. Joan of Arc, all owe their influence to Spiritualism. ' Can Spiritualism be the universal scientific religion? The universal religion will be Christianity, but this Christianity will be Spiritualist.'

After a eulogy of the ' civilising benefits ' of Christian Rome with ' its miracles of love and prayer and the incomparable lives of its saints,' he goes on to preach a doctrine of ' Deliverance, Fraternity, Equality, Spiritual Life—the Kingdom of Heaven.' He seems not to have read the words : ' Blessed are they that have not seen and have believed,' for he adds : ' Thanks to Spiritualism it is no longer Faith and Hope that open the gates of heaven, but Science and Certitude. . . . Spiritualism is scientific and it is religious. . . . How could any man's soul be other than penetrated by the highest religious feeling when he has constant proof that the dear dead he thought were lost for ever still live, are there beyond, speak to him, prove their identity in so many different ways, whisper words that deceive not, give irrefutable proofs and attest the perpetuity of existence.' (Mme Darel must have laughed scornfully, if silently, at this.) Finally, after contradicting himself several times over, our good M. Vallabrègue ended up on a note one suspected from the beginning as the dominant : ' The Church is dead. What we want now is the Church of Humanity.' (Applause.)

Knowing something of the character and history of the next speaker, I can imagine how he must have chuckled to himself at the effusive declamation of M. Vallabrègue. Right from the outset M. le Chevalier le Clément de St. Marcq rises supreme over the man-in-the-street for whom Christ came. St. Marcq

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has all the assuredness of the esoteric, the contempt of the Initiate for the uninitiated, coupled with a scorn of Christianity born of intellectual pride. 'Man is content with the inferior food of religious belief because the world in which he lives is incapable of providing him with anything more solid. . . . Faith, that little night-light so precious in days gone by because our ancestors had no other light to enlighten their way in the dark shadows of the past. . . . Spiritualism is to replace all beliefs. . . . In its progressive and limitless march it has against it the Priest ; for it, the People. . . . What brought about the tremendous transformation of primitive, revolutionary and spiritualist Christianity into a submissive, conservative, Christ-worshipping Catholicism was the suppression of the Agape . . . and the substitution of the Mass . . . the growing Catholic Church replaced in power, behind the Cross, the infernal band of dominating priests. . . . Spiritualism provides the world with a universal scientific religion ; but it lays stress as well on the divine right of the People ; it consecrates triumphant democracy in Humanity one and indivisible.' All this and much more, from a man whose writings 'under spirit guidance' dare not be published in this country.

M. Gabriel Delanne said there were too many religions already. 'Spiritism makes no philosophic speculations ; it invents nothing ; it merely proves. . . . It has no need of priests ; no need of any form of worship.' One wonders what the National Spiritualists' Union and the London Spiritualists' Alliance would reply to that.

The uselessness of expecting religious teaching of any definite sort from the dead is because 'whatever spirit of the dead you evoke, whatever religious denomination he belonged to in life, his attitude *post mortem* is always the same, provided only he did good.' Thus M. Delanne, who, by the way, is a re-incarnationist and a believer in the law of Karma.

Another re-incarnationist, M. Phillippe, stated bluntly and firmly : 'Strictly speaking, Spiritualism cannot be a religion. . . . Some of you say that Spiritualism has come to confirm other religions. Allow me to tell you—timidly, in face of the statements made to this effect that I listened to yesterday—that I reject that affirmation. . . . We do not know the true religion ; or, rather, there is no need for such a religion. . . . I conclude by stating, with emphasis : No, Spiritualism is not ; no, Spiritualism never will be ; no, Spiritualism ought not to be a religion.' (Loud applause.)

At last there was an English speaker, Mr. Hanson Hey, of the

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National Spiritualists' Union, England. Mr. Hey gave expression to vague Pantheism, and recited a paraphrase of the Lord's Prayer that only fell short of Mrs. Eddy's for bathos. 'There is too much talk about Saviours and intercession. The truth is that each man is as near to the heart of God as any other . . . each man must find the way to God by himself.'

One must pass over a number of addresses, some of which were mere rhapsodies of Positivism or Pantheism.

The next speaker calling for attention was Mynheer Beversluis, a minister of the Reformed Dutch Church. Mynheer's address was an 'apologia pro religione sua.' Once he believed in strict Calvinism. Then philosophy and science seemed to him to be in conflict with religion. Whilst distressed with doubts he met a friend who introduced him to Spiritualism. 'I thank God that this friend led me to Spiritualism, although he himself abandoned it later, and declared that it was a deceit of the devil. . . . Once I believed that Jesus was the Second Person of the Trinity, born supernaturally. . . . Now I recognise in Him the supreme example for all men. . . . Once I believed in the existence of the devil, the eternal enemy of God and of His elect; now I know he does not exist. . . . Once I believed in a Heaven of infinite and indescribable happiness prepared for the elect; and I know there is an infinite spiritual world consisting of innumerable spheres, of dark spheres for impure spirits, of shadowy spheres for repentant spirits, of spheres of light for purified spirits. . . . It is blasphemy to call Spiritualism a deceit of the devil; rather it is the dogmas of the various religions that are such.' There will be no resurrection of the body. The Bible has no value: 'The word of God is given to us in the communications of happy spirits . . . rather than in the writings of unknown men who lived on earth many centuries ago.'

And yet, according to some of the speakers, e.g., M. Vallabrègue, the Bible was all written under spirit-guidance.

The height of absurdity was reached by an Italian delegate, Captain Volpi. This enthusiastic speaker acclaimed Spiritualism as 'The Universal Religion without Priesthood and without Worship.' He based his convictions on 'a book dictated by Jesus Himself to the medium, Madame X., which completes the work of Allan Kardec, and gives us definitively the Universal Religion. . . . Jesus never pretended at any time that He was God . . .' but declared that 'from time immemorial divine worship has been a mixture of superstitious devotions and lying.'

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Mr. E. W. Wallis, then editor of *Light*: 'Spiritualism is, to my mind, the highest form of Protestantism' (p. 153).

By its leaders Spiritualism is declared to be at once: impossible as a religion; the perfection of Christianity; the unifying element of all existing religions; the only scientific religion; the one hope of humanity; the Universal Religion; mere scientific investigation, and yet not scientific at all because it deals with a subject outside the realms of science.

It is trustworthy because scientific; it is not trustworthy because the dead know no better than ourselves. It is dogmatic, yet it has no doctrines. It is the light of the world, yet all confusion. It has a positive message, yet 'the communications vary almost infinitely.' The dear dead speak to us, yet 'it is useless to ask them to give proofs of their identity.' It presents us with certitude, yet 'we shall never know with certainty what part the unconscious mind of the sitters may have in the communications.' It is perfect Christianity, yet Christianity is the devil. And there is no devil. It is, in fine, a Babel of conflicting tongues.

Nearly twenty years later—in June 1932, to be exact—the *Daily Mail* published a two-column article purporting to present the findings of a committee of clergymen that had been 'almost continuously in session' from January 1931. This committee busied itself with 'the growth of Spiritualism and whither it is leading us.' The whole article had a two-column wide banner-heading: SPIRITUALISM AS KEY TO THE BIBLE, with a sub-heading 'Claim that it is ally of the Churches.'

Further down the first column came a secondary heading which prefaced the report of the committee's secretary:

CLERGY'S INQUIRY

IS SPIRITUALISM A MAIN PART OF CHRISTIANITY?

The reply to that inquiry was very vague. The claim was made in the report that: 'To a distracted and profoundly materialistic world Spiritualism has come to show that the teaching of the Founder of Christianity is really true.'

Well, surely, no Christian needs any help from Spiritualism to enable him to believe that.

At the meeting, held in All Souls' Church Room, Langham Place, where the committee was inaugurated, the main address was that of the Rev. G. Vale Owen. Mr. Owen was not present in person, so his address was read on his behalf.

The Rev. G. Vale Owen referred to the current issue of the

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Church of England Newspaper in which the Bishop of Ripon expressed the view that "at any moment the Christian Church may be faced by one of her great historic opportunities."

"The great historic opportunity has been with us for the last half century, and the Church has turned a deaf ear and blinded vision upon it because it is new ; in other words, unorthodox and therefore not respectable," said Mr. Vale Owen.

"You will have to throw your orthodox theology into the melting pot and re-fashion it anew. For instance, the Christ of our orthodox formulæ will disappear and there will arise another conception of Him of much greater majesty, more lovely and more real than the conception we have been given of Him in our creeds and articles" (*Liverpool Daily Post*, Jan. 16, 1931).

One naturally asks, what greater majesty could be given to Christ than that contained in the Nicene Creed : ' God of God, Light of Light, Very God of very God, Begotten, not made, Being of one substance with the Father ; by whom all things were made, Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven ' ?

What ' greater majesty ' is accorded to Him by denying that He is God-Incarnate equal to the Father and the Holy Ghost ? Is it adding to His majesty to place Him on a level with Mahomet, Confucius or Buddha ? Is it not rather a blasphemous derision of His majesty to put Him as one who ranks with such *Lyceum Manual* ' canonised saints as Sappho, Aspasia, Shelley and Thomas Paine ' ? (*Lyceum Manual*, § 145).

' Oh, but a Christ " more lovely." '

Now, did the Rev. G. Vale Owen really believe that in deposing Jesus Christ as the Redeemer of the world, the Victim of Calvary, he was presenting the world, in the name of Spiritualism, with a ' lovelier ' and more loveable figure ?

The honesty and mentality of a man who could recite the Nicene Creed in his church Sunday after Sunday, and yet deny on Spiritualistic platforms, and to the larger public of the Press, the Divinity of Christ is something beyond reasonable comprehension.

And that point is one that gives the hall-mark of the evil nature of Spiritualism—its attack, in many cases a *savage* attack, on the Personality and Divinity of Jesus Christ. Thus stamped it betrays the place of its origin.

Mr. Vale Owen might well say, at the close of his address, that the change in our valuation of Jesus Christ through the adoption

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of the Spiritualist valuation would mean 'going through a bit of mental hell.'

Who wants to go through such 'mental hell' to please a man who puts his own ideas about life after death above the teaching of Our Saviour Jesus Christ?

Jesus Christ said definitely that there would be no marrying or giving in marriage in heaven. This statement is recorded in *three* of the four Gospels. But Mr. Vale Owen, having been through his 'mental hell,' knew better; and so he informed the world that his daughter Ruby, who died when a few months old, had grown to be a beautiful angel, had married, and was now teaching her children to sing in the heavenly choir!

And that is the sort of teaching our English and American Spiritualists expect us to believe.

When ministers of a Christian Church can adopt that attitude we need not be at all surprised to find Mr. Ernest W. Oaten, 'one of the world leaders of Spiritualism,' being reported as saying: 'Spiritualism is leading to individualism in religion and the break-up of authoritative churches' (*Daily Mail*, June 17, 1932).

Surely Mr. E. W. Oaten belies his position as one of the world leaders of Spiritualism by such a display of ignorance. 'Individualism in religion' had a really good send-off when Luther declared and proclaimed the Protestant principle of Private Judgment, which was some time before 1848.

Ah, but 'it is leading to the break-up of authoritative churches'! Is it?

There is only one authoritative Church, the Catholic Church. And that is not breaking up.

We have heard that story from Spiritualists for close on a hundred years; but the Catholic Church still presents to the world a solid organisation that many fear and many respect. Even Hitler (I write this in December 1943), despite the fact that Italy has deserted him, and that German troops are in Rome, has so far not dared to treat the tiny principality of the Vatican State as he treated Belgium, Holland, Denmark and Norway. He knows he has to respect the neutrality of the Vatican.

And the Vatican represents the Catholic Church.

Mr. Oaten is not alone amongst the prophets who have foreseen the destruction of the Catholic Church. From even Italy the same cry has gone forth. In *Luce e Ombra*, September 1916, there was published a diary of spirit-messages which contained a

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more emphatic prophecy than that of Mr. Oaten : " *Lo Spiritismo conquisterà le vostre scuole, le vostre cattedre, le vostre accademie . . . conquisterà anche la Chiesa* "—Catholic schools, cathedrals, universities, even the Catholic Church herself were to be overcome, vanquished, destroyed by Spiritualism.

Well, Nero thought to destroy the Church ; Arius thought it ; Luther thought it ; Henry VIII and Bloody Queen Bess thought it—and now a few Spiritualists who imagine themselves to be big noises think it : ' *Lo Spiritismo conquisterà anche la Chiesa,*' declared the spirits themselves.

' *L'Eglise est morte—The Church is dead,*' said M. Albin Vallabrègue at the Geneva Congress (p. 27).

' *Sa destinée est de disparaître,*' declared the erotomane St. Marcq.

One after another Spiritualists in England, in North and South America, in various countries of Europe have repeated the parrot-cry : Spiritualism will dominate the world. Speaking of the heresies that have seemed to threaten the existence of the Catholic Church in the long course of her history a man of saner vision wrote these words : ' To have fallen into any of those open traps of error and exaggeration which fashion after fashion and sect after sect set along the historic path of Christendom—that would indeed have been simple. It is always simple to fall ; there are an infinity of angles at which one falls, only one at which one stands. To have fallen into any one of the fads from Gnosticism to Christian Science would indeed have been obvious and tame. But to have avoided them all has been one whirling adventure ; and in my vision the heavenly chariot flies thundering through the ages, the dull heresies sprawling and prostrate, the wild truth reeling but erect ' (G. K. C. in *Orthodoxy*, p. 185).

This threat to the Catholic Church is held as a bogey before us because of a ' New Revelation,' as Conan Doyle called it—not a new Revelation by Almighty God, but a new message from a dubious, unidentifiable, unhistoric spirit.

It really is a bit tiresome to have all these occult movements thrust upon our notice as something NEW. We have had Mme Blavatsky's ' New Theosophy ' ; Sir Oliver Lodge's ' New Catechism ' ; Lady Emily Lutyens' ' New Gospel ' ; the Faithists' ' New Bible for a new Cycle ' ; the new system of *Hatha Yoga* of Dr. O. Z. Ha'nish ; the ' New Revelation ' of Conan Doyle—and they are all, oh ! so old and so lifeless ; so old that they are dead.

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And the Catholic Church is so alive.

The strangest thing about all these 'New' movements is that they base their newness on 'the Wisdom of the Ancients': on Zoroastrianism, early Buddhism, Brahminic tantras, Gnosticism and the Old Testament.

How well St. Paul's words apply to those modern seekers after *aliquid novi*, something new; how fittingly the Catholic Church can address them to Spiritualists, Faithists, Theosophists, followers of the Kosmon Light and the rest: 'Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are too superstitious. For passing by and seeing your idols, I found an altar also on which was written TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. What, therefore, you worship, without knowing it, that I preach to you' (Acts xvii, 22-23).

And what the Catholic Church teaches is good, sound common sense.

Throughout these articles only the views of non-Catholics have been quoted. Thus the charge of Catholic prejudice has been obviated.

Let us read what another non-Catholic has to say about the Catholic faith.

'Notwithstanding the obstinate preference the "bulk of mankind" always show for demonstrable errors over undeniable proofs, the number of persons is daily increasing who have begun to put a value upon mental coherency and to appreciate the charm of a logical position.

'It was common talk at one time to express astonishment at the extending influence of the Church of Rome, and to wonder how people who went about unaccompanied by Keepers could submit their reason to the Papacy. . . . It used to be thought a sufficient explanation to say either that the man was an ass or that it was all those Ritualists.'

Since those words were written by Mr. Augustine Birrell in his essay 'The Via Media' many more men of talent, unaccompanied by Keepers, have submitted to Rome—Papini, Joergensen, Alfred Noyes, Arnold Lunn, Ronald Knox, G. K. Chesterton, Christopher Dawson, Jacques Maritain, Douglas Woodruff, Henri Ghéon, George Glasgow and a thousand other men of high attainments. But, as Augustine Birrell goes on to say: 'It is not the Roman ritual, however splendid, nor her ceremonial, however spiritually significant' (though this it was, the present writer submits, that brought the noted Satanist

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Huysmans into the Church) 'nor her system of doctrine, as well arranged as Roman law and as subtle as Greek philosophy, that makes Romanists nowadays.

'It is when a person of religious spirit and strong convictions as to the truth and importance of certain dogmas—few in number it may be ; perhaps only one, the Being of God—first becomes fully alive to the tendency and direction of the most active opinions of the day, when, his alarm quickening his insight, he reads as it were between the lines of books, magazines and newspapers ; when, struck with a sudden trepidation, he asks, "Where is this to stop ? How can I, to the extent of my poor ability, help to stem this tide of opinion which daily increases its volume and floods new territory ?"—then it is that the Church of Rome stretches out her arms and seems to say : "Quarrel not with your destiny, which is to become a Catholic. You may see difficulties and you may have doubts. They abound everywhere. You will never get rid of them. But I, and I alone, have never coquetted with the spirit of the age. I, and I alone, have never submitted my creeds to be overruled by infidels. Join me, acknowledge my authority, and you need dread no side attack and fear no charge of inconsistency. Succeed finally I must, but even were I to fail, yours would be the satisfaction of knowing that you had never held an opinion, used an argument, or said a word, that could fairly have served the purpose of your triumphant enemy."

'At such a crisis as this in a man's life, he does not ask himself, How little can I believe ? With how few miracles can I get off ?—he demands sound armour, sharp weapons, and, above all, firm ground to stand on—a good footing for his faith—and these he is apt to fancy he can get from Rome alone.

'No doubt he has to pay for them, but the charm of the Church of Rome is this : when you have paid your price you get your goods—a neat assortment of coherent, interdependent, logical opinions.'

Apply these words of a non-Catholic to Spiritualism. Can Spiritualism truthfully say it has never 'coquetted with the spirit of the age' with its changes from 'astral body' to ethereal substance' and 'ectoplasm' ? Can Spiritualism maintain that it has 'never held an opinion, used an argument, or said a word that could fairly have served the purpose of the enemy,' with its contradictory teachings of being Christian and denying the Atonement ; of being a religion and not being one ; of being

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Theosophical and not Theosophical; of being backed by the Bible and denying the value of the Bible?

Does Spiritualism, in the face of its multiplied contradictions between English, American and Continental beliefs present 'a neat assortment of coherent, interdependent, logical opinions'?

The price you pay for admission to the Church of Rome means the keeping of the Ten Commandments; humility of intellect; and possibly the loss of some friends. But having paid the price you get the goods—and they are good.

Your dead you leave in the Hands of God, knowing that He is infinitely merciful, infinitely forgiving and infinitely good.

Whilst Christianity in general is the object of attack by many leading Spiritualists, it is the Catholic Church in particular which comes in for the bulk of their abuse.

The reason for this is obvious: the Catholic Church and the Catholic Church alone condemns Spiritualism outright. Other Christian bodies may coquette with it; her attitude remains unchanged and adamant.

Professor C. E. M. Joad, in his *Guide to Modern Thought* (p. 148), remarks on the merely half-hearted way in which other religious bodies frown on Spiritualism, adding 'the Catholics, as usual, providing an exception to the prevailing anæmia of religious conviction by downright denunciation of intercourse with what they do not hesitate to call evil spirits and even demons and devils.'

What else can Catholics believe it to be when it can lead so many to abandon the true, historic Christian faith in Jesus Christ as the Divine Redeemer, and can even prompt a Lyceum leader to refer to the Almighty (as he did in a letter to the present writer) as 'that hydra-headed monster called the Christian God.'

Is this the 'beautiful and lofty' teaching 'that comes from the higher spiritual sources' that Lady Doyle referred to in the *Sunday Dispatch*? She added: 'If all the fine sermons I have ever heard were put together they could not compare with the wonder of one of the marvellous discourses I have heard from the higher Spirit people' (*Sunday Dispatch*, Jan. 11, 1931).

'Beautiful and lofty'—with Jesus Christ no longer our Redeemer, and 'a hydra-headed monster' as the description of Almighty God!

Be the alleged spirit utterances 'beautiful and lofty' or not we are entitled to ask: WHY SHOULD SPIRITUALISM BE LOOKED UPON AS A RELIGION?

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Spiritualists are almost unanimous in declaring that Spiritualism has no *creed*, no *dogmas*, no *form of worship*. If it has none of these things it cannot be a religion. That fact was pointed out very emphatically at the Geneva Congress. It remains the professed attitude of *Psychic News*.

Therefore, to attack Spiritualism by exposing its frauds, its chicanery, its lying messages, does not constitute an attack on anyone's religious beliefs.

What Spiritualists fail to realise is that THE SAME PHENOMENA WHICH THEY CLAIM TO OBTAIN BY INTRODUCING A PSEUDO-RELIGIOUS ATMOSPHERE (singing 'Nearer, my God, to Thee' and 'Onward, Christian Soldiers') CAN BE OBTAINED AND HAVE BEEN OBTAINED WITHOUT THE INTRODUCTION OF ANY RELIGIOUS ELEMENT.

Dr. Schrenck-Notzing secured his alleged materialisations with Eva C. and Stanislaw P. independently of any suggestion of religion at his séances. What is more, he stressed that point himself in his book *Materialisations phänomene*. Dr. Carlo Alzona also calls attention to the fact, and adds: 'Che sia possibile ottenere fenomeni medianici di grande intensità senza le preghiere, i canti, le animate conversazioni sopra soggetti mistici era da molti anni dimostrato'—'It was proved years ago that it is possible to obtain mediumistic phenomena of great power *without* prayers, hymns, or lively discussions on mystical subjects.'

Mr. Harry Price, Founder and Director of the National Laboratory of Psychical Research, provides supplementary confirmation of multiform phenomena obtained without any religious element being even suggested.

In his book *Leaves from a Psychist's Case-Book* he gives interesting accounts of séances held with the Schneider brothers (Rudi and Willy) in Munich, Braunau and London. At these séances instead of hymns and prayers we read of noise, chatter, music-hall songs and folk-songs, with a good chorus.

I quote from Mr. Price's illuminating volume.

At Munich: 'The first portion of the sitting was not very successful, and after requests from the medium (entranced) for more *noise*, talking, etc.' . . . (p. 22).

'The next stage of the sitting was remarkable for some well defined phenomena. . . . After repeated requests from the medium for more *noise*, talking, etc.' . . . (p. 22).

In the record of another séance at Munich we read: '9.26. We recommence singing and the medium beats time to the music

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by banging his fists on my thighs. Curtains still agitated. Curtains twisted by some invisible agency. Luminous "angel" sways up and down and nearly falls. We cry out "Bravo ! Otto," "Thank you, Otto," etc.' (p. 36).

At a later sitting: '10.07 . . . Circle commences singing "Katharina" (which has a fascinating lilt to it)' (p. 44).

There follows the account of the sittings held in London when Willy Schneider's brother Rudi gave a 'Fraud-proof manifestation at the National Laboratory for Psychical Research.' Captain Noel Gow gave his report on it in *Light* (April 27, 1929); in the course of it he says the sitting 'was decidedly unæsthetic, and dignity was conspicuous by its entire absence. . . . *We all sang. It was a grotesque noise* ; but it apparently served some necessary purpose. In low, whispered, guttural German, the voice of Rudi, the agent for "Olga," the presiding intelligence, asked for all to sing, and we obeyed loyally. "Katharina" and "Valencia" were her two favourites. Sometimes we sang unaccompanied, at other times with gramophone accompaniment. Both methods were equally cacophonous' (pp. 63-64).

Mr. Harry Price states that the phenomena produced by Willy and Rudi Schneider 'have impressed both British and Continental scientists' and have provided a subject 'about which scores of articles and several books have been written.'

The same remarks can be made regarding the phenomena obtained through the mediumship of Eva C. and Stanislaw P. I myself have read accounts of them in *Die Uebersinnliche Welt*, December, 1913, by Dr. Josef Peter; in *Luce e Ombra* (a series of articles Jan.-April 1914), by Dr. Carlo Alzona; and French reports. In none of these is there any indication that the séances were in the slightest way religious meetings, or that the séances were other than mere experiments in psychical research.

If all these alleged phenomena, ranging from bell-ringing, curtain-billowing and handkerchief-manipulation to partial or complete materialisations, can be produced as a form of leger-demain, are we to conclude that if, instead of 'Katharina' and 'Valencia,' the sitters had sung 'Onward, Christian Soldiers,' or 'Nearer, my God, to Thee' the proceedings would have been a religious service of the kind advertised as 'Church Services' in Spiritualist newspapers?

'Let us approach this, as far as possible, in a religious spirit,' said Sir Arthur Conan Doyle at Ada Besinnett's flying-tambourine exhibition in total darkness. 'Let's sing "Katharina,"' says Mr.

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Harry Price. . . . And Mr. Price got the better value for his money.

One can only conclude that we must agree with that ardent Spiritualist M. Phillippe, whose final words at the Congress met with 'loud applause' (vifs applaudissements) : ' I say with all my soul : No, Spiritualism *is not* ; no, Spiritualism *never will be* ; no, Spiritualism *ought not* to be a religion.'

III

DEATH—HEAVEN v. THE SUMMER LAND v. THE BLUE ISLAND

DESPITE the emphatic declaration of M. Phillippe, and leaving out of consideration the findings of the Deuxième Congrès Spirite Universel, which were 'that the question needs further study (la question a besoin d'être encore étudiée) (p. 200), let us assume that Spiritualism is a religion, and not merely a racket or scientific research—WHAT HAS IT TO TELL US OF THE WORLD TO COME?

Seeing that its beliefs are professedly all based on the information provided by those who have 'passed over,' we may surely expect to get some definite, detailed and accurate information on that point.

After all, according to Spiritualists themselves, they are not angels nor devils who manifest at séances, but our own friends and relations who have passed over the great divide. In the Congress Report the late E. W. Wallis, then editor of *Light*, used almost those very words.

I quote from the Report (p. 183): 'Les entités de l'au-delà ne sont ni anges ni démons, ce sont des êtres humains.'

Surely, then, those, at least, of them who were Spiritualists whilst living on this earth, knowing the keen anxiety of their friends still on earth to learn something *definite* about the life after death would be only too ready to supply the information.

Do we get that definite information? We certainly do not.

Reams and reams of paper have been used up and wasted in the pretence of providing descriptions of life in the 'Summerland' or the 'Blue Island.' Fantastic, fanciful and fallacious accounts have been published all purporting to be spirit communications; but from their discrepancies and contradictions one can only conclude that these messages are *not* the product of any human soul that had reached Heaven.

I am perfectly aware that all sorts of excuses are made for the variations and discrepancies in these accounts.

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We are told, for instance, by way of explanation, that *the spirit had only recently passed over*; and, of course, being only on one of the lower planes, could not be expected to give an accurate account of life in the *au-delà*.

Or, as a further explanation, the excuse is offered that he '*may be in a fog-bound belt, and can remain there for centuries apparently without knowing he is dead*' (*Heritage of the Dead*).

Mr. D. Conan Doyle, writing in the *Sunday Graphic and Sunday News* (Nov. 18, 1934), replies to the question:

'4.—Do all those who pass on know at once that they are dead?

'No. It is an interesting fact that many men and women who have passed to the next world have no idea as to their true position. Many think that they are dreaming, though they cannot understand the reality of everything.

'They are often very indignant when they are informed that they are "dead," and in some cases they are unable to realise their condition for years.'

Or, again, *sudden and tragic death*, according to the editor of *Psychic News* (Nov. 27, 1943, p. 4), may result in the dead not knowing they are dead—and so we cannot expect any accurate information from them. Mr. Barbanell, the editor in question, says: 'We are becoming familiar with many cases of "dead" airmen, for example, who still go on flying their aeroplanes and working at their aerodromes, thinking all the time that something must be wrong with their former earthly associates who are unable to see or hear them.'

In his account of the George Valiantine sittings of 1927, Mr. H. Dennis Bradley tells us of a 'spirit' who announced himself as Harold Howard. 'Harold Howard' 'said he was killed in the war: in an advance "over the top." He told me that it was at least twenty minutes before he realized that he had passed over. He stated that for this twenty minutes, although his body was lying on the field, he went on with the attacking party thinking he was still alive. He then found that those around him could not see him, and he went back and viewed his body lying dead' (. . . *And After*, pp. 80-81).

The Rev. G. Vale Owen, in his lecture on 'Life Beyond the Veil,' stated that 'Death was a perfectly natural process of which nobody need have any fear. It was exactly the same thing as falling asleep, with the exception that the cord which held the spirit to the material world was broken, and the sleeper woke up

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in the new world, where his friends would be waiting to receive him, and to teach him his way about in spirit life.'

Mr. Vale Owen made no mention of any difficulties due to fog-bound belts or to people killed tragically not knowing they were dead. His lecture gave one the impression that men who were killed in action found communication with this world easy: 'The spirits of young men who fell in the war told him not to be afraid of death. "When you get up here," they said, "you will get the shock of your life, because you will find out you are just as you were."'

We are led, then, to ask: What *really* is the explanation Spiritualists wish us to accept to account for these conflicting statements?

According to newspaper reports, well-known people die and almost immediately after their death mediums in various parts of the world claim to be in communication with the spirits of these notabilities.

Immediately after the death of Edgar Wallace a medium claimed to have had a message from him. The genuineness of the message was denied by Mrs. Wallace on the grounds that if it were really her husband who had given it his first concern would have been not for his dog, as the medium stated, but for herself.

In his *Leaves from a Psychist's Case-Book* Mr. Harry Price, in the chapter 'Conan Doyle "comes back"' (p. 97), states: 'At 3.43 on the afternoon of July 7, 1930, a press agency rang me up and informed me that Sir Arthur Conan Doyle had "come back" and manifested through a medium in the Midlands—*exactly 6½ hours after the passing of the great apostle of spiritualism.* . . .

' . . . Within forty-eight hours of Doyle's death I had received seventeen reports to the effect that Sir Arthur had "returned" through mediums in Vancouver, Paris, New York, Belgium, Italy, and other parts of the world. . . . On one day it appears that Sir Arthur was at Wilkes Barre, Pa., and Lyons (France) at practically the same moment.'

Raymond Lodge is alleged to have begun to communicate with his family *eleven days* after he met with a tragic and sudden death in the last war.

Miss Estelle Stead, by her own account in *The Blue Island* (p. xvi), talks with her father *fourteen days* after he was drowned when the *Titanic* went down.

'Jimmy Sparrow,' a cockney boy, aged ten, who was knocked

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down and killed by a lorry in the East End of London, spoke, a few weeks after he was killed, to the editor of *Psychic News* at Hannen Swaffer's circle (*Psychic News*, Jan. 6, 1943).

So it looks as if the 'sudden and tragic death' explanation is a very poor one; and the 'fog-bound belt' is even weaker; and if Conan Doyle could manifest 6½ hours after passing over, well, the excuse of 'the shortness of time' does not hold water at all.

But what are we to think of W. T. Stead, whose sudden and tragic death presented no difficulty to his realising, *within 'a few seconds,'* that he had passed over? 'I was still so near the earth that I could see everything going on there. Where I was I could see the wrecked ship, the people, the whole scene; and that seemed to pull me into action—I could help! . . . and so in a few seconds—though I am now taking a long time to tell you, it was only a few seconds really—I found myself changed from the helpless state to one of action; HELPFUL not helpless—I was helpful, too, I think' (*The Blue Island*, p. 38).

Raymond Lodge, W. T. Stead, Conan Doyle, Jimmy Sparrow, Edgar Wallace—all manifesting so soon after death: what are we to conclude? On the plea of the shortness of time that elapsed between the death of three of these important witnesses and the time when they first got into communication with their friends on earth, are we to disregard all that they are alleged to have said about the Blue Island or the Summer Land?

I put the question from the standpoint of Spiritualists—personally I do not believe that any one of the accounts furnished is genuine and authentic. But the Spiritualist *has* to face the difficulty. In the matter of psychical (or mental) phenomena he has no canon of judgment—he has no more reason for denouncing one medium as fraudulent than he has for accrediting others. If a medium in the Midlands claims to have had a spirit message from the defunct Sir Arthur Conan Doyle 6½ hours after his passing over, is that medium's claim to be rejected in favour of a fabulous, unidentifiable 'Pheneas' who is alleged to have lived before Abraham and who gives his messages through the mediumship of Sir Arthur's widow?

Must we rely only on the accounts furnished by unidentifiable 'guides' who masquerade as High Priests of Egypt, unknown Red Indians, or the prophet Malachy using the *nom-de-séance* of 'Imperator'?

These are not vague rhetorical questions; they concern the

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vexed problems of authenticity, genuineness and identity. They are crucial points.

However, let us take it that these older 'guides,' philosophers and 'spirit' friends did pass over thousands of years ago. They ought, by now, to know something definite, detailed and reliable about the conditions in which they now live. How does the story told by the old arrivals compare with that of the new arrivals?

Strangely enough, in view of the excuse put forward to cover the discrepancies and contradictions in spirit messages, viz. that the new-arrival had not been long enough in the spirit-world to be able to communicate accurately, the description given to the Doyle family by the ante-Abrahamic 'Pheneas' tallies to a great extent with that given by the alleged Raymond Lodge.

'But that just goes to show how accurate the two accounts must be!'

Does it? Drop your insularity, my good Spiritualist friend. Read the 'messages' given to Continental Spiritualists and to many in the United States of America. They don't tally with the 'messages' given for British consumption.

Once again I refer my readers to the Report of the Second International Spiritualist Congress. I do so because that Congress concerned itself to a great extent with the question of the *trustworthiness* of spirit-messages. An intelligent study of that Report shows the marked difference between British and Continental ideas of the future life.

However, since this book is intended for English-speaking readers we shall confine our study of the life-to-come to the accounts provided by English-speaking mediums and their English-speaking Red Indians, Arabs and Egyptians.

We ask these spirit-guides:

Under what conditions does the soul survive? and what is life like in the world to come?

As soon as that question is put disagreements, and disputes even, arise. And this is strange and puzzling.

Suppose a hypothetical inhabitant of Mars were to arrive on this globe of ours, would we not expect him to be able to tell us something definite, something detailed and specific about the conditions of life amongst the Martians?

And suppose that this good Martian was found to be unable to give any really definite information as to the Martians' mode of life (the food they eat: their occupations; their style of houses; and so on, and so on), but could merely reply that they did not

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eat meat ; their occupations were ' more vital ' than ours ; their buildings were, well, *buildings*, what would we conclude ?

Suppose, further, that other Martians arrived and that they, in reply to our questioning, gave reports entirely contradictory of that supplied by the first arrival, and disagreeing also amongst themselves, would we not be justified in wondering not only which of them to believe, but also whether they all came from the same place ? And perhaps we might even be justified in disbelieving whether any of them came from Mars.

Yet that is the state of things regarding the alleged spirit-messages so readily believed in by Spiritualists. And we Catholics are reckoned to be the ones who are credulous ! These wonderfully well-informed people who know so much about heaven—yes, the term ' heaven ' is used by them sometimes—seem to sneer at the Catholic ideas about the life after death. They refer contemptuously to the conception of what they call the ' orthodox heaven.' The Rev. William Stainton Moses started the fashion just on seventy years ago. Since then Spiritualists of a less educated type have repeated the adjectival phrase parrot-like. Some of them do so without knowing the meaning of ' orthodox.' It means ' sound opinion or doctrine.' And just as we find them incapable of understanding the real meaning of ' creed ' or ' doctrine ' or ' dogma,' so we find editors of Spiritualist newspapers writing about ' false orthodox teaching ' (*Psychic News*, Nov. 27, 1943).

Stainton Moses, the *Lyceum Manual*, and Mr. Ralph Shirley all have their tilt at what they term ' the orthodox heaven.' This ' orthodox heaven '—though where they get the idea of its being orthodox is a puzzle—is a ' psalm-singing heaven ' (*Lyceum Manual*), a heaven ' of angels with harps sitting on damp clouds ' (Ralph Shirley).

And the joke is against them.

The *Lyceum Manual* abounds in doggerel verse describing angel choirs ; the Rev. Vale Owen left it on record that his daughter Ruby is training her children to sing in the heavenly choir ; and Mr. Shirley himself cites a passage from *The Letters of a Living Dead Man* (a book that meets his entire approval) in which a wandering soul in the world to come is carried off ' to some similitude of the orthodox heaven ' (*Occult Review*, April 1914, p. 193).

Stainton Moses speaks of ' the mass of contradictions in the messages,' and from the point of view of the alleged claims of

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Spiritualism these contradictions are unfortunately most marked in the descriptions of life after death—descriptions furnished, mark you, by people who have ‘passed over.’

Stanton Moses might interject, were he alive to-day, that it is ‘the *material* heaven’ that has gone with the advent of Spiritualism. But has it?

The Summer Land, or Heaven of the Spiritualists, is nothing if not material; it is so very material that its very distance from the earth can be measured—that is, if we accept the assurances of those who pretend to know. But even this matter of the distance of the Summer Land from our poor earth is not without its contradictions:

The ‘spirits’ informed Professor Robert Hare that the spirit world lies between 60 and 120 miles from the terrestrial surface (*Experimental Investigation*, p. 87).

The operative word here would seem to be ‘lies,’ because the spirits also informed Mr. J. H. McKenzie that ‘the Summer Land’ is ‘1,350 miles from earth’ (*Spirit Intercourse*, p. 203).

However, the difference between 120 miles and 1,350 need not trouble us because other visitors from the *au-delà* informed Andrew Jackson Davis that the Summer Land ‘is a belt of land extending above the earth two-thirds of the distance from the sun’ (*Morning Lectures*, pp. 349-350). That makes it about 60,000,000 miles away!

Anyway, the Summer Land is somewhere. It has a more or less geographical position; perhaps not sufficiently accurately charted for aeronautical navigation—but there it is.

We next want to know how the departed soul reaches the Summer Land, be the distance 60 miles (Hare) or 60,000,000 miles (Davis); and how does it fare when it gets there?

Well, we really don’t know. Some of the *revenants d’outre-tombe* tell us one story, some tell a taller.

The Rev. G. Vale Owen tells us that we simply fall asleep, ‘and the sleeper waked up in the new world, where his friends would be waiting to receive him.’

Air Chief-Marshal Sir Hugh Dowding offers for our belief a message alleged to have been received ‘through the pencil of Colonel Gascoigne’s daughter, Mrs. Hill’ (*Sunday Pictorial*, June 6, 1943). Colonel Gascoigne is dead, but he has organised the transmission of messages from the Summer Land to earth.

One message given in that issue purports to come from ‘the driver of a tank in Libya.’ At the end of a supposed description

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of how the whole crew of the tank came to realise they were dead—'He said to me, "Why, Alf, we're dead now." . . . So we both laughed, not caring, yet caring very much'—we are told that the driver thanked his officer and asked if all were safe; and 'he said, "Yes, and now we'd best be going, but where to I don't know."

'So we just trudged on after him without taking any particular direction, and soon we came to quite a different country; I was glad to leave the desert behind and be in wooded country again. We were joined by others of our own forces and others of all kinds.

'Suddenly I felt so tired that I lay down in the shade of a big tree covered with fruit, and that is the end of my first venture. I can't write any more to-night.'

The alleged spirit of W. T. Stead gives a more detailed account: 'The scene on the boat at the time of striking was not pleasant, but it was as nothing to the scene among the poor souls newly thrust out of their bodies, all unwillingly. It was both heart-breaking and repellent. And thus we waited—waited until all were collected, until all was ready, and then we moved our scene to a different land.

'It was a curious journey that. Far more strange than anything I had anticipated. We seemed to rise vertically at terrific speed. As a whole we moved, as if it were on a very large platform, and this was hurled into the air with gigantic strength and speed, yet there was no feeling of insecurity. . . . We were quite steady. I cannot tell how long our journey lasted, nor how far from the earth we were when we arrived, but it was a gloriously beautiful arrival' (*The Blue Island*, pp. 39-40).

But Sir Oliver Lodge has a version of his own. He gravely informed us in *Raymond* that the flight of the soul is not left to the forces of gravitation. The fond fancies of childhood are all ruthlessly dispelled by the discoveries of science. We do not mount to heaven as glorious rays of light, nor as spirit-forms clothed in gleaming robes of white; we do not mount on a platform 'hurled into the air with gigantic strength and speed'—no . . . we go as SMELLS.

The human body, says the inventor of the theory of ether, contains 'etheric substance' which is dissipated at death, but is gathered together by 'a spirit doctor who comes round.' This etheric substance of the human body is transmitted to the next world by the gases and smells of putrefaction.

(Query: Can smells travel 60 million miles?)

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When the spirit doctor has gathered the smells and gases together (one supposes he knows which belong to each of the hundreds and thousands of bodies that are either buried in the ground, drowned at sea, cremated in cemeteries, burnt at funeral *ghats* or exposed on 'towers of silence' each day throughout the world) then some of the new arrivals 'dwell in a fog-bank and can remain there for centuries, apparently without knowing they are dead' (*Heritage of the Dead*); many, because of 'years of false orthodox teaching, do not realise they have passed on' (*Psychic News*, Nov. 27, 1943). Some are given a choice of the sphere in which they wish to dwell (*The Voices*—by Admiral Moone). Some are given spirit garments which they soon change for their old kit (*Raymond*). Some are left with their 'old rusty black frock somewhat out of date' (*Letters of a Living Dead Man*), just as W. T. Stead found that his father was 'dressed as I had always known him' (*The Blue Island*); his suit, also, must have been 'somewhat out of date.'

'In clothing,' the pseudo W. T. Stead informs us, 'we are practically as on earth, and as there are so many races here you can well understand the general appearance of this land is most unusual, and in an odd way particularly interesting and amusing' (*The Blue Island*, p. 65).

One can quite imagine how amusing it must be to see those who were drowned whilst bathing, wearing perhaps no costume at all, competing, in the matter of dress, with the Kavirondo from Uganda, or the Australian bushman or some of the tribes from the Belgian Congo.

It may be comforting to some—to the *gourmands* or the *gourmets*—to know that on arrival they can get a meal right away. At least 'W. T. Stead' says so: 'Everything and everybody seemed to be quite normal—quite as on earth. We went out together and had refreshment at once' (p. 47).

'At once,' mark you. Isn't that fine! Not content with that, following 'a long walk together along the shore' they 'arrived at length at a huge building, circular and with a great dome. . . . We stayed there some time and had refreshment very similar, it seemed to me, to what I had always known, only there was no flesh food' (p. 50). . . . 'Looked upon as a meal—a lunch out—it was the longest one I have ever known' (p. 55).

Poor Stead seems not to have got into a first-class eating-place for he refers to the refreshments as being very similar to what he had always known; whereas other spirit messages say that they

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have food over there, but 'Not in your sense but much nicer. Such lovely essences and wonderful fruits, and other things besides, which you don't have on earth.' But the cigars and whiskey, manufactured 'out of essences and ethers and gases' of which *Raymond* tells, are apparently provided for all.

And what is life like in the Summer Land or the Blue Island?

Despite the assurances repeated a hundred thousand times over at séances that everyone is 'happy, very happy—much happier than when they were on earth,' a tiny glimmer of logic and of the sense of justice betrays itself occasionally in Spiritualistic writings; hence we find admissions here and there that some are not happy because their lives on earth were evil. Others are unhappy as a result of their false 'orthodox' religious beliefs. The pseudo-Stead provides us with a saddening thumb-nail sketch of *many* whose unhappiness starts from the moment of death: 'A matter of a few minutes in time only, and here were hundreds of bodies floating in the water—dead—hundreds of souls carried through the air, alive; very much alive some were. Many, realising their death had come, were enraged at their powerlessness to save their valuables. They fought to save what they had on earth prized so much' (*The Blue Island*, p. 39).

Letters of a Living Dead Man presents the picture of an unfortunate, hapless, helpless woman who, when on earth, lived in one boarding-house after another in the United States. This unhappy soul fancied she was still living in a boarding-house, and, in consequence, was most miserable.

She was met on the astral plane by the spirit who communicated the *Letters of a Living Dead Man*, and he attempted to console her, asking her to tell him her troubles.

"Why, I hardly know where to begin," she answered. "I have found so many unpleasant things."

"What, for instance?"

"Why, horrid people. I remember that when I lived in—— I sometimes told myself that in the other world I would not be bothered with boarding-house landladies and their careless hired girls; but they are just as bad here—even worse." . . .

"Is the table good in your boarding-house?" I asked.

"No, it is worse than at the last one."

"Are the meals scanty?"

"Yes, scanty and bad, especially the coffee."

Now, can any thoughtful, earnest Christian who believes in an infinitely good God really be convinced that the Almighty would

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allow a hapless soul to go wandering in heaven suffering from delusions like that ?—' Especially the coffee.'—Let the reader ask himself honestly : does the story ring true ?

We are told regarding the author of this book that he was ' a well-known American lawyer, who was also a profound student of philosophy, an author, and a man whose ideals and enthusiasms were, in the words of the transcriber, an inspiration to everyone who knew him.' We are told also that ' It is obvious that the writer took over with him to the other side the keen intelligence of an investigator as well as the impartiality of the judicial mind ' (Ralph Shirley in the *Occult Review*, Vol. XIX, No. 4, pp. 185-6). In praise of the book the same article says : ' Compared with it, all previous records seem trivial and commonplace.'

Unfortunately the incident of the deluded and miserable boarding-house lady is not the only one which the book contains to contradict the platitudinous ' I am happy, very happy ' of the common circles. Not everybody is happy over there.

However, to enable us to guard against this unhappiness there are warnings uttered by this anonymous well-known American lawyer. One is : ' Don't look back,' a warning against ' the terrible curiosity to go back and look upon that body which we once believed to be ourselves.'

The other warning is : ' Beware of deathbed repentance and its after-harvest of morbid memories. . . . He who dwells upon his sins in his last hour will live them over and over again in the state beyond the tomb.'

Now, what evidence do these statements provide of ' the keen intelligence ' of the author or communicator in these two warnings ? Does not everybody know that within a few days after burial the remains of a human body are *not* an object anyone would wish to gaze upon ? Who would be so consumed by curiosity as to wish to return to this world to see a mass of corruption and worms ?

Happily this picture of lost souls in rusty black frocks remaining in a dream-state that is so desolate, or of souls that return to pore over the corruption of cemeteries is not the only side there is to the descriptive spirit accounts we are vouchsafed of the Summer Land. There are other accounts of the lower spheres that vie with the so-called orthodox materialist descriptions of hell. But let us look now on the brighter side.

Thanks to the information supplied by an Arabian sage who lived before the time of Abraham, and to that supplied by other

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'guides,' like 'Lily,' conveyed through the mediumship of Lady Conan Doyle, and by Claude Bamber, we have the assurance that whilst we here await the time for our passing over there are friends of ours busy building houses for us in the Summer Land.

Little do people dream as they go to the pictures or to the theatre or to their work that all the time they are intent on their amusements or pre-occupied with their business, architects and bricklayers in the next world are planning our future homes for us in preparation for our arrival.

These homes are houses of red brick, and the bricks are made by extracting substances from the air with a machine like a dynamo; and the houses are built in 'gardens where the flowers turn towards you as you enter, or, in case they don't like you, turn away.'

They 'have rooms as on earth, but so much lovelier. The colours are so much daintier, and the fabrics so much more delicate.'

The spirits eat and sleep: there are cigars and whiskey, but no beds—'Spirits . . . repose on a velvety kind of grass.'

Whilst the ideals of the Temperance Societies (Band of Hope, and so on) are rejected those of the Vegetarian Societies are respected. 'We have no meat here,' but the rest of the food is 'much nicer' than that on earth: 'lovely essences and wonderful fruits, and other things besides.'

It seems such a shame that the hapless boarding-house tenant was left so long without finding this out; the 'lovely essences' would have compensated for the vile coffee.

One only wonders why there should be so much activity on the part of the architects who plan the houses so very anxiously and of the men who do the bricklaying and tend the dynamos when other 'spirits' assure us that they have only to 'breathe forth the desire and the thing is created.' Fancy all those workmen wasting their energies so: bricklayers, painters, slaters, the men who lay the terraces and dig the oblong ponds, the plumbers, the gardeners, the carpenters and the joiners, and the upholsterers who handle the delicate fabrics. How inconsiderate on the part of the 'spirits' not to 'breathe forth the desire' for what they want and so save all that trouble.

Perhaps the explanation is that we all carry on in the Summer Land with our earth-time avocations, because we are told that doctors go on with their medical work—midwifery and testing smells for the identification of bodies—and writers still write. Medical work and literary pursuits are pleasant occupations, but

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do servants still have to sweep and clean, have they to wash up when the superior 'spirits' have drunk their whiskey and eaten their 'wonderful fruits,' or have had the longest meals they ever knew in the domed buildings of the Blue Island ?

Of course it is not only the doctors and writers who are able to carry on with their professions. Nor is it all work and no play. 'It seems that all the senses are provided for here. The chief work on this island is to get rid of unhappiness at parting from earth ties, and therefore, for the time being, the individual is allowed to indulge in most of earth's pleasures. There are attractions of all kinds. . . . Whatever the person's particular interest on earth has been, he can follow it up and indulge in it here for the present. All mental interests and almost all physical interests can be continued here. . . .

'There are houses given over to book study, music, to athleticism of all kinds. Every kind of physical game can be practised—you can ride on horseback, you can swim in the sea. You can have all and any kind of sport which does not involve the taking of life.'

In case the reader should wonder how 'athleticism of all kinds'—cycle racing; the 500 yds. and the mile; dirt-track racing; football; cricket; and so on—can be practised in a house, I must point out that these houses are larger than Hitler's Chancellery (that was) with its frontage of 800 yards.

During that longest meal he had shortly after his arrival W. T. Stead had explained to him by his father the purpose served by the various 'houses.'

'He explained to me that the place we were then in was a temporary rest house, one of many, but the one most used by newly arrived people' (p. 55).

It was not only a house; it was a building. 'There were other buildings used for the same purpose as well as for other purposes; by that I mean that there was more than one of each.

'These different houses were not all alike, they varied considerably in outward appearance, but there is no need to describe each. To call it a big building is sufficient, and by that you must understand a place like your museum or your portrait gallery, or your large hotels . . . anything you like, and it is near enough. But it was not fantastic in any way and had no peculiarities, therefore by "building" I mean a building only' (pp. 55-56).

So now, gentle reader, after that masterly description, you can understand how houses can be 'given over to athleticism of all

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kinds'—because these houses are 'buildings,' and by 'buildings' the spirit of Mr. W. T. Stead means buildings.

The musician and the man with literary leanings are well provided for: 'Music belongs to this land.' 'Then there is the bookworm. He, too, finds intense satisfaction in his new-found facilities. Knowledge is unlimited—works of priceless value, lost upon earth, are in existence here' (p. 57).

So the scholar may look forward to finding the missing papyri of the Egyptian *Book of the Dead*, the treasures of the libraries of ancient Alexandria and of modern Louvain.

One little point that will appeal to the Rockefellerers, the Morgans, the Rothschilds, the Leverhulmes—'The keen business man on earth whose only interest is in making his business successful will also find scope for his ability. He will come in contact with the house of organisation, and he will find himself linked up with work transcending in interest anything that he could have imagined for himself whilst on earth' (pp. 57-58).

Not only those who are seriously concerned with their sport or music or books or business have every means of being 'happy, happier than on earth,' but larking larrikins are not left without their opportunities for fun. The Rev. G. Vale Owen, in his lecture on 'The Life beyond the Veil,' declared that 'The spirits were no more straight-laced than mortal creatures, and were just as fond of humour. A group of young soldiers told him that they had visited his old church at Orford, and stayed there throughout the service; and when he asked them 'What did you do about the collection?' they only laughed and replied, 'Oh, we cut that out.'

Mr. Vale Owen's larking soldiers are not the only spirits who are 'no more straight-laced than mortal creatures,' 'ever-loving husbands,' as Damon Runyan described them, also come back to earth to embrace their wives. At least, so we are informed by Lady Caillard in an article she wrote for *Psychic News*. This is what she tells us:

'A few days before Christmas I was asked by my husband—Sir Vincent Caillard had been dead some time—to arrange for a Christmas party on Christmas Eve. There was to be a Christmas tree for the spirit children, and I was to hang up my stocking. He said he would put something in it, even if it was only a clothes peg. The party was to be held at Mrs. L. E. Singleton's house, and only three of us were to be present—Mrs. Singleton, B. K. Kirkby, and myself. . . . *After our usual prayer (italics mine), and before*

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we had finished playing a Christmas carol on the gramophone, little Ivy came and asked Kirkby to 'Stop it,' meaning the gramophone. She told us that the room was full of children who had come to the party. . . .

'One of the most wonderful things happened at this party. I was not going to write about it, because I feel it is too sacred. But Sir Vincent says he is so proud of being able to do it that he wished me to add it.'

Here the next two lines are printed in italics :

'He was able to put his arms round me and kiss me three times. . . .

'I think it was the most wonderful party I ever attended.'

I like the way in which the bashful italics are introduced, like a coy, shy maiden whispering a secret : *'He was able to put his arms round me and kiss me three times' !*

One wonders what Mr. Kirkby thought of it—or didn't he? Mr. Kirkby, by the way, was one of the witnesses for the defence in the recent Helen Duncan trial for fraudulent mediumship. And why the 'usual prayer' at the beginning, to be followed by 'The Big Bad Wolf' on the gramophone? Is 'The Big Bad Wolf' a hymn?

However, we'll leave these grown-ups to their fun and games and pass on to the bed-time stories of the Summer Land as told by Grandpa Andrew Jackson Davis, Auntie Caillard, and other well-known friends of spirit-children.

Now here is a very special message for the children.

Children in the Summer Land—that's Heaven, you know; only Spiritualists don't seem to like the Bible-name of Heaven; they prefer to call it the 'Summer Land,' or 'The Blue Island,' or the 'Return or Stay Sphere' or something like that—anyway, children are well cared for there, very well looked after. They live in surroundings where there are flowers and rippling brooks, 'the silver seas and the murmur'ing trees' and 'evergreen fields' and 'the echoes caught from the birds of Paradise.' And the place is full of angels 'whose presence is marked by an iridescent glory, and their footsteps are luminous long after they have passed' (*Lyceum Manual*, § 204). Should this be 'foot-prints,' by any chance?

The silly psalm-singing Heaven is done away with; but there still is music in the Summer Land. The angels may not 'sit on damp clouds' to play their harps as Uncle Ralph Shirley would have it, but they still have their harps and they still sing. Uncle

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Alfred Kitson has told us so. Now, just get out your *Manual* and you'll learn all about it in section 201, 'Spiritual Harps':

'We come, we come with our harps of gold,
From the far-off Summer Land,
The crystal river we've crossed again,
We've left an angel band
To bring to you on our golden harps
Sweet music from afar;
With cadence soft the Angels sing,
As they glide from star to star.

Gliding from star to star is ever so much more pleasant than sitting on one of Uncle Ralph Shirley's damp clouds, even though the stars may be millions of miles apart. But I wonder, children, does gliding from star to star afford any opportunity for leaving 'luminous footsteps'? It sounds like *Alice in Wonderland*, doesn't it?

Anyway, children, you need never be frightened of death; Uncle Kersey tells us that 'Children enter the Spirit World as Spirit Children.' He does not say how they get there: whether they go bang up on a kind of Magic Carpet, like Uncle William Stead did; or whether they go up as smells, like Uncle Oliver says.

Well, when children get there they don't feel lonely. 'Good and loving Spirit Friends gather round to welcome the little stranger, and if the child's earthly mother has preceded it, the mother takes charge, if worthy; otherwise it is placed in charge of a good Spirit who is specially noted for love of children.'

And 'Children grow in Spirit-Life . . . their spirit bodies grow so transcendently lovely, no human mind can conceive of the beauty and grace of these little ones.'

When they are old enough they go to school.

Of course they are not called 'schools'; they are 'Progressive Lyceums,' which is ever so much nicer—just like the word 'Summerland' is nicer than the word 'Heaven.' So you won't mind going to a Progressive Lyceum in the Summerland, will you? After all, Uncle William Stead has told us that all grown-up people have to have lessons there; and in any case 'the method of teaching is mostly by object lessons'—so Uncle Kersey says. Besides, they are such lovely schools! The English Board of Education would *never dream* of black-listing the Summerland schools because the spirit children are 'assembled

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in large and *beautiful* halls arranged in groups, where they go through some *beautiful* marches, in which are illustrated the motions of the planets round the sun.' They also have '*beautiful* lessons in geography.'

I'm sure I'd like a '*beautiful*' lesson in geography; but I don't think I could '*march*' whilst illustrating how the earth goes round the sun. It *would* be difficult and dizzying, wouldn't it?

There is a language of colour, too, which is taught in the Summer Land—by the way, children, you may spell it: Summerland, Summer-land or Summer Land—and the Lyceums 'are surrounded by large and beautiful gardens, where birds sing, flowers bloom, waters ripple and fountains play.'

And then, just like Hitler's Youth, after their drill the Lyceum members march 'in perfect order, over undulating plains, with banners waving, and making the valleys resound with their sweet melodies, while on their way to visit some other Lyceum, who receive them with friendly greetings, giving either the right-hand symbol of "Good will" or the left-hand symbol of "Fraternal love."'

All this *must* be true, children, because Grandpa Andrew Jackson Davis saw it 'in his visits to those regions of the spirit world where spirit children are instructed.'

What is more, the Lyceum owes its origin to 'spirit revelation which shows us how God's will is done in heaven.' (*Lyceum Manual*, §§ 139 and 148).

Of course 'these spirit children' do not spend ALL their time in the Lyceum; they have their games and fun just like the grown-up people. Like the soldiers killed in the last war who used to visit the Rev. G. Vale Owen's church at Orford—perhaps you remember hearing of Mr. Vale Owen: he was the clergyman who used to go travelling round to tell people all about the Summer Land, and who said at the beginning of a lecture: 'I am still a member of the Church of England and a member of its priesthood, and I wear my collar the wrong way round as a sign that I still belong to that benighted body'—well, just as dead soldiers used to visit his church, so children 'return at times to visit their earthly friends. Their Guardians bring them back to their earthly homes, that they may learn the lesson of earth life, feel the warmth of parental love, and know the joy of earthly affections.'

And if they are very, *very* good they may join in the Christmas parties given on earth for spirit children by soft-hearted people

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like Lady Caillard and Mr. and Mrs. Perriman ; and *there are Christmas trees* at these parties specially for spirit children !

Sometimes, like at Lady Caillard's, the darkened room is 'full of children who have come to the party,' and they 'touch the things on the tree' and 'ring all the bells at once.' Isn't that lovely, children ? Fancy ringing all the bells at once ! and in the dark too ! !

There is music on the gramophone at these parties, and there are 'plated hand-bells' and even 'special crackers' sometimes. Even clothes-pegs—just fancy, children, *clothes-pegs*—are put in the stockings that have been hung up by the soft-hearted ladies.

And just as children who still live on earth have their little tiffs even at Christmas parties, so do the spirit children. At least there was some trouble at Lady Caillard's party when she 'had bought a doll for Ivy,' who was a negro spirit child, and 'there was some trouble over this.'

'Jack Cornwell came and said : "That little black kid is awfully cheeky. She dug me in the ribs and told me to get out, because I touched her doll. I told her I would give her something when we got back this evening."'

Perhaps poor Jackie couldn't give Ivy something till they got back because he couldn't see her in the dark.

Anyway, they played 'The Big Bad Wolf' on the gramophone, and all the spirit children 'kept time with the trumpet and the bells.'

And you need not be afraid of these parties, children, just because they are held in the dark. Lady Caillard said : 'It was all so natural' ; so you need not fear there was anything supernatural about it.

So now, children, you can see how, both for yourselves and for grown-up people, Spiritualism has got rid of EVERY idea of a material heaven. *The Summer Land is all so very spiritual.* Angels still have their golden harps, but they only sing when gliding from star to star, leaving luminous footsteps behind them long after they have passed ; they would never dream of singing whilst sitting on damp clouds, but they might when reposing on velvety grass.

All these silly Christians may believe that the happiness of Heaven consists in the Beatific Vision—that is, in seeing God, Who made the human soul and for Whom the human soul was made ; but Spiritualists know better.

On page sixty-one of the Rev. Stainton Moses's book, *Higher*

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Aspects of Spiritualism, we read: 'This, then, is spirit-teaching . . . : God is spoken of as the Supreme, All-wise Ruler of Creation, the Object of the ceaseless adoration of all created sentient (*sic*!) beings. NO SPIRIT WHO COMMUNICATES WITH EARTH, HOWEVER LONG HIS SPIRIT-LIFE MAY HAVE BEEN, PRETENDS TO HAVE SEEN HIM, OR TO HAVE PENETRATED TO HIS PRESENCE.'

You can understand now, children, the beauty of Spiritualism. Instead of a state of unending bliss where sorrow and tears are no more; where the human will is perfectly satisfied with the love of God, and the human mind is equally satisfied by all knowledge through the Vision of God seen face to face, Spiritualism tells you that you can still quarrel in the Summer Land, and envious boys can 'give little girls something' for digging them in the ribs; and children can go to Progressive Lyceums and do beautiful marches from one to another; and at Christmas time they can leave the celestial festivities, that Uncle Maurice Barbanell has told us about, and come millions of miles to beautiful parties held in darkened rooms on earth, and ring all the bells on the Christmas tree at once—and they need not give a single thought to the Baby Jesus Christ Whose birth on earth inspired the idea of a feast for children on the anniversary of His Nativity.

Good-night, children.

All the above details about life after death are taken from alleged spirit-messages. Much is supplied from the book of Miss Estelle Stead and Mr. Pardoe Woodman, entitled *The Blue Island*, which is offered to us as the revelations of W. T. Stead who was drowned on the *Titanic*. For sheer banality and vague generalities *The Blue Island* would be hard to beat.

W. T. Stead, former editor of the *Review of Reviews*, had a great name in journalism. At the time of his tragic death continental Spiritualist newspapers and monthlies praised his literary ability. The editor of the *Revue Spirite*, in the issue for January 1912, said of him: 'M. W. T. Stead . . . est non seulement en Angleterre mais encore dans tous les pays de langue anglaise, un publiciste de haute autorité, et pour son grand talent, pour sa culture intellectuelle'—Mr. W. T. Stead is, not only in England, but also in all English-speaking countries, a journalist of great authority both on account of his great talent as well as for his intellectual culture.

In an obituary notice of his death we read in *Psychische Studien* (June 1912): 'Er ist bei zu seinem Tode der anerkannte Meister

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des Interviews geblieben und der glänzendste Journalist Englands'—He remained till his death the acknowledged master of interviews and the most brilliant journalist in England.

I challenge anyone who has had even only a fairly good literary training to find any evidence of 'great talent' or 'intellectual culture' in his alleged spirit communications as contained in *The Blue Island*.

To begin with, the book damns itself by the inclusion, as frontispiece, of a photograph of Miss Estelle Stead which carries on it a 'spirit extra.' To anyone who knows a little even of the Crewe Circle photography and of the exposure of the spirit-photographer, Mr. Hope, who took this photograph of Miss Stead, suspicion at once suggests itself as to the genuineness of the contents of the book. Added to this is the fact that in place of the clear and defined and intelligent account of his new life that one would expect to get from 'England's most brilliant journalist' we are presented with vague generalities, clumsy expressions, escapist phrases and platitudinous moralisings.

This is how 'W. T. Stead' sums up life on the Blue Island: 'When you are inclined to ask: "What are they all doing there?" turn your mind to some dear one on earth who has taken up an out-of-the-way kind of life somewhere abroad, where you are not in constant and intimate touch, and say of him, "I wonder what he's doing now?" . . . Then answer it by saying, "I suppose he's carrying on." So are we, we people in the Blue Island' (p. 68).

With the picture of 'Sir Vincent Caillard' kissing his wife at the Christmas party, and remembering all that Dr. Peebles, Mr. Stainton Moses and others have told us about the hordes of earthbound spirits who 'hover round the confines and rush in when the gates are set ajar,'—and so on for three pages of *Spirit Identity*—we leave it to the humourist to interpret that passage for himself. As for the seriously-minded I would ask: Does any one of these alleged spirit descriptions of the Summer Land approach within a fraction of the beauty of the reward one would expect from a God of infinite holiness and infinite love?

Have the 'spirits' and their automatic human agents—be they clairvoyant, clairaudient, or cosmopathic—no idea of the dignity of the human soul? Has any 'spirit' ever communicated any reflections, ideas or thoughts comparable with the writings of St. Augustine, St. John of God, St. Teresa of Avila, or the *Imitation of Christ* of St. Thomas à Kempis?

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Do Spiritualists really believe that the martyrs of the early Church, the Apostles, St. Stephen, St. Agnes, St. Francis of Assisi, St. Vincent of Paul, St. Joan of Arc, St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Clare and countless others who left all things to follow Christ are to have in the next world as their reward merely a repetition of our present life on earth ?

Instead of swallowing wholesale and believing blindly the fourth-form standard of essays on life after death as provided, for example, in *The Blue Island*, would we not honour God more by trusting Him to provide a reward hereafter more in character and keeping with His infinite purity and goodness and power ?

To present for our belief pictures of the longest meal one ever knew, Hitlerian marches for children, every kind of sport—swimming, horse-riding, shooting (without killing)—Christmas trees with plated bells, and cuddling in the dark as the best that an Almighty and Infinitely Perfect God can provide for those who have served Him well during their life on earth is little short of blasphemy. The religious mind revolts from it. It dishonours God. It is a patent lie.

IV

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HAVING read the preceding chapter on Heaven, the Summer Land, the Blue Island and the 'Return or Stay Sphere,' the reader may be inclined to ask: If these descriptions of life after death are not communicated by spirits who have passed over, where do they come from? He may also ask how any spirit-messages are to be accounted for.

Briefly, the answer is: They practically all come from the wishful thinking of either the medium or the sitters.

'The sitters?'

Yes, the sitters—those forming the séance circle.

'But how?'

By telepathy—or, if you prefer so to call it, by thought-transference.

'Well, for thinking out loud!'

Let me indulge in a short preliminary digression.

The practice of modern Spiritualism began in the United States of America; and North America was also the birthplace of Western Theosophy. The terminology of Theosophy, with its 'auras' and 'astral bodies' and 'spheres' of post-life existence, was readily adopted by American Spiritualists. It soon became part of the jargon of all Western occult 'religions.' From the U.S.A. it passed to England, and was welcomed by English Spiritualists; and it is to-day to be found in use amongst the majority of Continental Spiritualists.

For quite a time Theosophists and Spiritualists were more than merely sociable and friendly. Then came the Leadbeater scandal. Rather than be mixed up in so sordid an affair the English Spiritualists dropped all association with Theosophy. As between cults the rupture was complete; but the terminology of Theosophy was, to a certain extent, retained by Spiritualists. For a time they had not a satisfactory vocabulary of their own. Later, they fell in with the more modern worship of 'science';

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evolution was in the air—hence all the present-day Spiritualist jargon of ‘evolution’ and ‘progress.’ Then, as one of the periodic meteors in the Spiritualist firmament, there burst across the sky of their world the light and effulgence of Sir Oliver Lodge.

The theory of *Ether* as interpenetrating all things had been mooted for some years; and quite a few people got used to the idea; but when, three years before the loss of his son, Raymond, Sir Oliver gave the inaugural address in 1913 to the British Association in Birmingham, he both startled the scientific world and rejoiced the hearts of Spiritualists by including in his address on ‘Ether’ and radio-activity a confession of faith in Spiritualism. Ether he declared to be ‘not matter, but material’ (non é materia, ma é materiale); ‘it is the universal medium of communication between worlds and infinitesimal particles’ (ed é il mezzo universale di comunicazione fra mondi e particelle infinitesime). [I quote and translate from the report of the address as given in *Filosofia della Scienza*, Feb. 15, 1914.] He speaks of ‘radiation,’ ‘etherial motion’ or ‘etherial movement’; ‘putrefaction’; ‘fermentation’; ‘evolution’; ‘vibrations’ and ‘waves.’

There followed from his pen, three years later, the book *Raymond*.

Now everybody knew vaguely of ‘ether’ and ‘waves’ and ‘radiation’ and ‘vibrations.’ They came so readily in use that people began to talk of ‘brain-waves,’ even. Sir Oliver was the new luminary in the Spiritualist world. The terms that he used proved a gift from the gods of science for the Spiritualistic vocabulary. Scientific terms of Greek origin had already become popular: phonograph, gramophone, telegraph, telephone were almost as much English as the few remaining Anglo-Saxon words to be found in our hybrid tongue.

A further enrichment of the Spiritualist vocabulary came as a windfall to supplant the Theosophical terms and theories, in the additional Greek words provided by the learned members of the London Dialectical Society, now the Society for Psychical Research; ‘telekinesis’; ‘teleplasm,’ ‘telaesthesia,’ ‘telepathy,’ ‘ectoplasm.’ F. W. H. Myers, in his *Human Personality*, gives a special vocabulary of 5 octavo pages. Many of them have as much value as explanations of Spiritualist phenomena as had Mesmer’s ‘fluid-magnetism’; yet they come as trippingly to the tongues of many Spiritualists as did ‘Abracadabra’ for more ancient magicians.

Modern Spiritualism must be up to date; and when science

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seems to rule the day scientific terms must be adopted. Though some Spiritualists may still refer to the 'spheres' of progress in the Summerland whilst others make them different islands, it is no longer the 'astral shell,' or the 'astral body' or the 'Atmic plane' to which they refer—no; Lodge won the day with his ETHER and his VIBRATIONS. Now all is 'etherial.' As we have seen in the previous chapter the 'etherial substance' of the body rises to heaven; cigars and whiskey are manufactured from the ether of the Summerland; 'essences and ethers and gases' seem to be the basis for all things produced there, from bricks to clothing; and houses have their coloured vibrations. Even on this earth mediums have distinctive vibrations.

With that evidence before us it is not far-fetched to conclude that either the medium imagines that by utilising Sir Oliver's pet theoretical terms in her description of life in the Summerland she will the better convince and please her important sitter; or, to give an alternative explanation, that Sir Oliver's predilection for the terms of his theory was communicated to the mind of the medium by telepathy.

Spiritualists do not like that word 'telepathy.' They will accept and use frequently such similar words as teleplasm and telekinesis; but telepathy is almost *tabu*—it is too accurate a term to use in explaining the origin of alleged spirit-messages.

Yet a man so prominent in the study of psychic phenomena as was F. W. H. Myers wrote in his Introduction to *Human Personality*: 'This work of mine is in large measure a critical attack upon the main Spiritist position, as held, say, by Mr. A. R. Wallace, its most eminent living supporter—the belief, namely, that all or almost all supernatural phenomena are due to the action of the spirits of the dead. *By far the larger proportion*, as I hold, *are due to the action of the STILL EMBODIED spirit of the agent or percipient himself*' (p. 7).

That is what I maintain; and to support that view is the object of this chapter.

Now, what precisely do we mean by the word 'telepathy'? Telepathy, to quote F. W. H. Myers, is 'The communication of impressions of any kind from one mind to another, independently of the recognised channels of sense'; or, as I would put it: the transmission of the thoughts or impressions of one person to the mind of another, without the use of the usual means of communication between mind and mind.

Ordinarily we use vocal sounds (speech); symbols (hand-

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writing); signs (gestures; the deaf and dumb 'alphabet'); or facial expressions, in order to express our thoughts or feelings to another person. But telepathy (or thought-transference) dispenses with all these. The thoughts are transmitted directly from one mind to another without the use of sound, symbol or sign.

The simplest examples of this are provided by what is called 'The Willing Game.'

Both Professor Sir William Barrett and Professor James H. Hyslop cite striking instances of telepathy. To avoid having the theory of 'muscle-reading'—which used to be alleged in order to explain the mystery of the willing-game—adduced as an alternative to telepathy, Professor Barrett conducted a series of experiments wherein there was no physical contact whatsoever between the 'operator' and the subject or 'percipient.' He wrote the following account in Chapter V of his book *Psychical Research*.

After alluding to his investigations during a period of five years, he says :

'One of these cases which seemed quite inexplicable on any theory of muscle-reading, and which was personally investigated during Easter 1881, was that of the children of the late Rev. A. M. Creery, a respected clergyman in Buxton. This case is historically of importance, for it led to the first clear evidence of thought transference *in the normal state of the percipient*. Stringent precautions were taken to avoid any information being conveyed to the subject through the ordinary channels of sense. For example, one of the percipients, Maud, then a child of twelve years old, was taken to an empty adjoining room and both doors closed. I then wrote down some object likely to be in the house, which we (the family together with myself) silently thought of. No one was allowed to leave his place or speak a word. The percipient had previously been told to fetch the object as soon as she "guessed" what it was, and then return with it to the drawing-room where we were seated. Quoting again from my communication to *Nature*—

"Having fastened the doors I wrote down the following articles, one by one, with the results stated—*hair brush*, correctly brought; *wineglass*, correctly brought; *orange*, correctly brought; *toasting-fork*, wrong on the first attempt, right on the second; *apple*, correctly brought; *knife*, correctly brought; *smoothing-iron*, correctly brought; *tumbler*, correctly brought; *cup*, correctly brought; *saucer*, failure. Then names of towns were fixed on,

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the name to be called out by the child outside the closed door of the drawing-room, but guessed when fastened into the adjoining room. In this way, Liverpool, Stockport, Lancaster, York, Manchester, Macclesfield were all correctly given; Leicester was said to be Chester; Windsor, Birmingham and Canterbury were failures."

'The success obtained in these and other experiments could not be explained by mere lucky guesses nor by involuntary guidance by those who knew, for these was no contact, and in some of the trials (as in the foregoing) the percipient was out of sight and hearing. Under such circumstances any secret code of signals between children would have been practically impossible to carry out; moreover, in several successful experiments no one but myself knew what was to be done.'

I stated earlier on that this book is not intended to be an essay on psychical research; hence I shall not feel called upon to multiply examples of telepathy. The above experiments by Sir William Barrett are referred to merely as an illustration of what is meant by thought-transference within the purpose of this book. Readers who might wish to know more about it will find a wealth of material on the subject in the volumes of the *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research*. What I wish to emphasise here, is that the mental phenomenon known as telepathy is an established fact.

That a few 'last ditchers' amongst the out-and-out materialist professors of physical science may still refuse to accept the phenomenon as proven means nothing. The history of hypnotism provides us with a glaring example of stubborn refusal on the part of scientists to face facts.

The first Medical Commission appointed to examine the claims of Mesmerism was set up in 1784. In its findings it admitted the cures but rejected the *magnetic-fluid* theory of Mesmer. Forty-two years later another French Medical Commission reported in favour of the mesmeric cures—but the report was suppressed by the medical faculty.

In place of the 'magnetic-fluid' theory of Mesmer, Dr. A. Bertrand introduced the idea of 'suggestion' as the influencing element in the various mesmeric phenomena which were now found to include the remarkable induction of complete anæsthesia in the patients.

Again the medical faculty discredited the results obtained.

Next, Dr. Elliotson became the protagonist of the cause of

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mesmerism in England. He was ostracised by the medical profession and lost his practice.

Most noteworthy of all was the case of Dr. Esdaile, Presidency Surgeon of Calcutta, who performed over 250 major operations on patients whom he had anæsthetised by mesmerism. He too lost his appointment owing to the stubborn opposition of the medical faculty.

I mention these cases merely to show how deeply rooted and fixed opposition can become in the minds of people with preconceived ideas as to the value of any theory which has not hitherto come within their experience or knowledge. What Sir Oliver Lodge termed 'orthodox science' is not always right; 'Science,' too, can be guilty of intolerance despite the wrecks of hypotheses and theories that strew the paths of its history.

It would be premature to add any further lesson from the reports in this morning's newspapers regarding the claims of Professor Felix Ehrenhaft to have discovered magnetic current—a discovery which, if confirmed, was stated by Sir Lawrence Bragg Cavendish, professor of experimental physics at Cambridge, to lead to 'a complete reversal of all our present thought' (*Daily Mail*, Jan. 17, 1944).

In his introduction to *Occultism and Common-Sense* (by Beckles Willson) Professor Barrett writes: 'It is amusing now to recall the fierce outcry aroused by the paper I read at the British Association meeting in 1876, when, after narrating certain apparently transcendental phenomena I had witnessed, I asked that a committee of scientific men should be appointed to investigate the preliminary question of the possibility of thought-transference. (The *Spectator*, I believe, alone, generously reported me, and in an editorial article on the 30th September 1876 expressed the hope that "the British Association would really take some action on the subject of the paper, in spite of the protests of the party, which we may call the party of superstitious incredulity"' (p. xii).

Hypnotism is accepted to-day by scientists; it has an established place in various forms of mental treatment. Psychiatrists of repute have recourse to it. What is it, then, that prevents the acceptance of the fact of telepathy by all scientists? Is it their 'superstitious incredulity'? Is it because, as Professor Barrett puts it, 'this particular field of psychical investigation belongs to an order other than that with which science deals'? Or is it their Zolaesque determination not to admit the existence of the human soul as a spiritual entity?

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Evidence of thought-transference from the hypnotiser to the subject is provided in hundreds and hundreds of cases. A simple and perfect example of this is given us by Professor Barrett in his book *Psychical Research*, to which reference has already been made. He experimented with an Irish village-girl with notable results. He says :

‘ One of the most interesting experiments was made when in answer to my request that she should visit London and go to Regent Street, she correctly described the optician’s shop of which I was thinking. As a matter of fact, I found, upon subsequent inquiry, that the girl had never gone fifty miles away from her remote Irish village. Nevertheless, not only did she correctly describe the position of this shop, but told me of some large crystals of Iceland spar (“ that which made things look double ”) which I knew were in the shop, and that a big clock hung outside over the entrance, as was the case. It was impossible for the subject to gain any information of these facts through the ordinary channels of sense. My friend, the late Mr. W. E. Wilson, F.R.S., was present when these experiments were made in his father’s house, and in answer to my request he subsequently wrote to me confirming them, saying, “ We proved beyond all doubt that the subject was able to read the thoughts of the mesmerizer.” ’

The italics in that account are mine : they are intended to call attention to the fact that the girl did not tell Professor Barrett anything he did not know himself ; she did not mention, for example, the time by the clock which hung outside the shop, nor whether it was going or not.

It was not a case of her reading his thoughts—as Mr. Wilson put it—but of her mind receiving the thoughts that were in Professor Barrett’s mind.

Sir William goes on to give in detail a number of experiments with another hypnotised subject. ‘ In these early experiments,’ he writes, ‘ I noticed that the hypnotised subject responded to thought-transference even when a considerable distance and opaque objects intervened ’ (p. 76).

These experiments were of the same nature as those described in his previous chapter wherein he dealt with THOUGHT-TRANSFERENCE IN THE NORMAL STATE OF THE PERCIPIENT.

Now then, what I want to emphasise in reply to the question : Where do ‘ spirit ’ messages, be they descriptions of the Summerland or merely messages in general, come from? is that since telepathy is possible (a) in the normal state and (b) in the hypnotic

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state *without any invocation of the dead*, it is equally possible at séances, whether the medium be in a normal state or in a trance.

That such is not only possible but *probable* is admitted by leading Spiritualists themselves.

For example :

Stainton Moses in his *Spirit Identity* wrote (p. 7) : ' The atmospheric conditions are so variable and exercise so powerful an influence : the investigator is dependent on the aid of those who form the circle ; and *each of these* imports his own conditions of error into the investigation ; these and other causes . . . render his early pursuit of knowledge liable to every fluctuating degree of error.'

What can this mean except that the mental ' conditions of error ' are conveyed by thought transference (telepathy) to the medium and so colour the ' messages ' given ?

In a section, addressed to Spiritualists only (pp. 31-32), on the ABSENCE OF PRECISION IN STATEMENT, he hints at similar influence : ' Another cause of doubt is the extreme difficulty usually found in getting any facts precisely given, *especially facts that are certainly external to the knowledge of the sitters.*'

Apply that to the descriptions of the Summer Land or the Blue Island : what knowledge have the sitters of life after death ?

In his almost impassioned appeal to Spiritualists to purge the movement, after a section on THE PURIFICATION OF PUBLIC CIRCLES, the same author deals with THE MEDIUM, AND THE NATURE OF MEDIUMSHIP as follows : ' The medium is a mesmeric sensitive, and as such is amenable to every dominant influence brought to bear on him. He is the receptacle of the several positive influences of the circle. If there be present a positive mind filled with doubt it reacts on the medium. If there be a scoffing, jeering spirit amongst those present, it cuts into him like a knife. If an over-clever person thinks he has detected or suspected fraud, that suspicion bites into the medium and " the iron enters into his soul "—precious rusty iron it is too. If vice be present, it reacts on him. If fraud suggests itself, he feels it. *He is the " wash-pot " into which the collective feelings and sentiments of the circle are collected.* And more than this. He is the link between them and the spirits whom their mental states attract. The communications are pretty sure to be the representations of the mental state of the sitters : unless indeed a powerful and controlling spirit is charged to protect and neutralise adverse influence. . . . If suspicious and evil tempers are pre-

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dominant, he is influenced in corresponding ways. A mesmeric sensitive, he comes under the dominant influence, and too often represents the wishes and thoughts of those who surround him' (*Higher Aspects*, pp. 89-90).

It is interesting, and up to date, to refer in this connection to an article published in the *Sunday Graphic* (Jan. 9, 1944), reporting an interview with Mr. George Bernard Shaw. G.B.S. is reported as saying: 'My experience of spiritualism began when I was a small boy. . . .' He then refers to Oliver Lodge and Conan Doyle. 'I am quite sure that neither of them ever cheated at a séance. Well, I have. I used to say that unless everybody cheated as hard as they could, and the results obtained went beyond those that could be obtained by cheating, the séances could prove nothing.'

'Accordingly I cheated, and was amazed at my success (I am no conjurer) and by the discovery that the more cultivated, clever and imaginative my victims were, the more easy it was to cheat them—or rather to induce them to cheat themselves.'

The Rev. William Stainton Moses does not stand alone in making such admissions. They have been made by continental Spiritualists also. Frau Maria Von Bergen, the representative of the Swedish Spiritualists, after declaring that it was useless to attempt to found a religion on the results of spirit communications 'because they vary almost infinitely, especially in these days,' gives as one of the reasons for these contradictions in teaching that they may be due 'to the hidden influence of the circle.'

Dr. Gustav de Gaj, the Jaska-Croatian Spiritualist leader, quotes the five classes of fraud on the part of mediums as detailed by Du Prel, and adds two more of his own explanations of fraud, the second of which being: 'Genuine fraud on the part of the medium due to mental suggestion from the members of the séance.' He goes further, and develops the idea that thought transference from the sitters can cause all kinds of fraudulent phenomena. He quoted Thomson Jay Hudson as stating in *The Law of Psychic Phenomena* that 'persons who are hypnotisable can be constantly controlled by suggestion.'

'Amor y Progress,' the Spiritualist Society of Mexico, in a paper issued by them on mediumship, also admits in determining the causes of fraudulent phenomena, one of them to be 'the influence of the sitters themselves.'¹

¹ In this connection it might be of interest to point out that arranging anonymously for séances with a real medium need be no safeguard. The consultant will pass on his name by telepathy.

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There is no need to multiply further the references to such admissions. The fact is there : telepathy is an actual occurrence. Thought transference by telepathy from the minds of the sitters at a circle incontestably does take place. The medium ' is the " wash-pot " into which the collective feelings and sentiments of the circle are collected.'

When in addition to that admission we get the further statement that as a result ' The communications are pretty sure to be the representations of the mental state of the sitters,' we are perfectly justified in asking : If that be so, OF WHAT USE WHATEVER ARE THOSE COMMUNICATIONS ? What value have they as *spirit* communications ?

Such admissions, especially those of Mr. Stainton Moses, plainly damn the *public* circles.

Who go to those circles but the curious, the credulous, and those who ought *not* to go, such as Stainton Moses's ' sorrowing widow, whose agonised mind is not in the best frame for accurate judgment ' ; the bereaved whom Sir Oliver Lodge warned to keep away. Yet these last are the very ones most attracted by the ' Church Notices ' that appear in the Spiritualist press, and they are the ones at the present time who almost haunt such services.

These so-called ' Church Services ' are nothing else but public séances, and they have about as much true worship of Almighty God in their composition as a Voodoo rite. George Valiantine would recite the Lord's Prayer at the beginning of his fraudulent séances with Mr. H. Dennis Bradley ; and the fraudulent Mrs. Murphey-Lydy did the same. The singing of :

' God of the granite and the rose !
Soul of the sparrow and the bee !
The mighty tide of being flows
Through all Thy creatures back to Thee '

would never turn any public séance into a genuine act of worship of the Almighty. (The verse of the ' hymn ' is taken from § 229 of the *Spiritualist Lyceum Manual*.)

The late H. Dennis Bradley believed in spirit communication as strongly and as firmly as did the Rev. Stainton Moses, and yet we find him writing : ' Spiritualism is now being foisted on the public as a religion. I assert deliberately that as a religion it is a farce. Tinpot little churches are being erected all over the country ; irresponsible spiritualistic tub-thumpers are appointing themselves as preachers of a new gospel ; dud clairvoyants are giving banal exhibitions at their church services under the blas-

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phemous guise of spirituality. Boring and ill-written hymns are sung; hypocritical hymns are intoned by vulgar and crafty mediums; and the name of God is dragged into abysmal mud. (. . . *And After*, p. 392).

How *can* these public séances be of any use? And the bigger the attendance the less chance is there of getting 'successful descriptions and spirit messages.'

This is what a medium, who claims, in 1931, to 'have been acquainted with Spiritualism for nearly thirty years,' has to say on the subject. It is Mr. Horace Leaf, F.R.G.S., writing on 'Spiritualism and Christianity' in *The Two Worlds* (Feb. 6, 1931). Mr. Leaf's name has been familiar to me for over thirty years. He himself appeared on many a platform and conducted 'Developing Classes,' at home, and public classes.

In the previous chapter I mentioned the discussions conducted at All Souls' Church Room, Langham Place, with regard to the discussion on 'Spiritualism by clergymen and ministers' of the Protestant denominations—not of ALL denominations, please, Mr. Leaf. Referring to that same meeting, Mr. Leaf writes: 'Only brief reports of the ministerial gathering have been published, but these convey the impression that the case for Spiritualism was well stated, and in the end it was decided to hold a meeting at which a clairvoyant will be invited to demonstrate "how spirit messages are received." *This will be no easy task*, and we extend to the medium *bold enough* to accept this invitation our best wishes for a successful demonstration. My opinion is, that *no matter how well-intentioned the rev. gentlemen may be, conditions will not be easy*' (my italics). 'A few years ago I attended a conference held in London by the Church of England to discuss Spiritualism, and was appalled by the ignorance and resentment of some of the clergymen. If there prevails at the forthcoming meeting anything like the same spirit, it will require a perfect Samson among clairvoyants to give successful descriptions and spirit messages.'

I would ask my readers to note those words of Mr. Horace Leaf: 'no matter how well-intentioned the rev. gentlemen may be, conditions will not be easy' (p. 84).

En passant I might as well state that Mr. Leaf, in the same article, also says: 'The teachings are *always* gravely affected by the beliefs of the medium.'

On the opposite page of the February 6, 1931, issue of *The Two Worlds* is the report of an interview with Mrs. Estelle Roberts. It

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is headed : THE FAITH OF A GREAT MEDIUM. 'She was the great sensation of the great memorial meeting held in the Royal Albert Hall, London, a few days after the death of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.' I may have some further comment to make later on their interview. What concerns the present chapter is that J. L., the contributor of the article, after a very laudatory description of the powers of Mrs. E. Roberts, says : 'Spiritualists are always talking about "conditions" at their meetings and séances. Mrs. Roberts does not mind much about conditions. Though it is generally agreed that a large hall crowded by all types of people is about the worst place for obtaining evidential psychic phenomena. . . .'

So there you have it ; 'Spiritualists are always talking about "conditions" at their meetings and séances'—by way of excuse for failure, I presume ; Mr. Horace Leaf despairs almost of getting 'successful descriptions and spirit messages' at a meeting where 'well-intentioned' rev. gentlemen are present ; and J. L. tells us that 'it is generally agreed that a large hall crowded by all types of people is about the worst place for obtaining evidential psychic phenomena.'

Then why continue to hold the meetings in large halls ? If the presence of well-intentioned rev. gentlemen is going to queer the pitch, what is it going to be like when people of 'all types' are present ? Nearly every condition that can ruin a séance is present ; doubt, curiosity, fickleness, hostility, credulousness and the rest . . . not to mention the possible adverse 'atmospheric conditions.'

In addition to these adverse conditions there remains the very important fact, which is also admitted by one leading Spiritualist after another, that *psychic phenomena are not always 'on tap.'* They cannot be produced at will.

Let me assure any Spiritualist readers, once again, that I am not writing 'without the book.' I quote two statements (many others could be given), one from the Continent ; one from an English medium.

M. Pillaut, an outstanding personality in French Spiritualist circles, put, and answered himself, these two questions at the Congrès Spirite Universel at Geneva—regarding the medium :

'Est-il le maître absolu de ses facultés médiumniques ?'

—Non, puisqu'il ne peut les mettre en pratique qu'autant qu'il est actionné par une psychose adéquate à la mise en œuvre de ses facultés.

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— Suffit-il qu'un médium et que les personnes assistant à une séance de médiumnité le désirent, en fassent la demande, pour que les facultés médiumniques du médium soient actionnées ?

— Non, il faut que l'Esprit ou les Esprits désincarnés disposés à cet effet, le veuillent, le puissent, ou sans cela aucune manifestation ne se produira' (p. 107).

Mr. H. Dennis Bradley, who had an unshakeable belief in spirit communication, wrote : ' I have had many years of intensive mediumship, but I have never before heard the assertion made : " You will immediately hear a voice respond." All my experience has shown that *it is impossible to turn on the psychic tap at will* ; especially is this impossible in *all* the cases of genuine phenomena ' (. . . *And After*, p. 274).

This very fact that spirit phenomena cannot be produced at will is adduced by Spiritualists themselves as an excuse for even the most notable mediums resorting to fraud.

A striking example of the inability of mediums to produce phenomena at will is furnished by Mr. Harry Price in his *Leaves from a Psychist's Case-Book* (pp. 351, ss.). It is the case of ' a wonderful psychic,' Frau Matylda Strzetuska, whose phenomena were said to range ' from spirit voices to materialisations, and from psychic raps to levitations.' Mr. Price says : ' I will not weary the reader with the details of the séances, as nothing whatever happened. *We sat solidly every night*—Sundays included—for three weeks, and not a single phenomenon (genuine or otherwise) was witnessed.'

The editors and proprietors of Spiritualist newspapers must know this as well as anyone. Is it honest of them, then, to publish column after column of ' Church Notices ' or ' Society Advertisements ' announcing public séances in the way they do ? Can they guarantee that at precisely 3.30 there will be a genuine ' Public Transfiguration in full light ' ? Can they guarantee that between 10-3 on a Saturday, or 12-3 on a Tuesday at Finsbury Park, and between 11.30 and 4.30 at Cuffley there will be genuine ' healing by SWIFTFOOT ' ? What assurance can they give that all the conditions will be good ; that there will be no ' well-intentioned rev. gentlemen ' present ; and that, though large halls are the worst places for obtaining evidential phenomena, in every hall or church or temple where the advertised séances are to be held, guaranteed evidential phenomena will take place ?

Further on in this chapter I shall give a list of over thirty reasons,

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reasons advanced by Spiritualists themselves, which militate against successful results and actually lead to fraud—in fact they are excuses to explain fraudulent phenomena. Some of them may be given as excuses for failure or untrustworthiness in the case of private circles; but they can nearly all be applied to the public séance as well.

One can understand the attitude of Mr. Harry Price exposing fraudulent mediumship; but when it comes to the fulminating denunciations of the Rev. Stainton Moses, Dr. J. M. Peebles, and H. Dennis Bradley—all of them enthusiastic believers in spirit communication—then there must be something *very* wrong about public séances.

'Yes, yes,' some Spiritualist may interject, 'that may be true of the public meetings for phenomena, with their promiscuous gathering of sitters; but what about the private, home circles? They are different.'

Are they so very different? Cannot thought-transference or telepathy take place at a private séance as easily as at a public one? Is there not even a greater chance of such telepathy in the home circle, where a positive or dominant mind amongst the few sitters would have less difficulties to contend with than amongst hundreds or thousands in a large hall?

We have already seen how 'the positive influences of the circle can influence the medium.' That can happen, that *does* happen, in the private circle also. The Lodge phraseology is an illustration of this.

Hyslop, Barrett and Myers in their experiments dealt only with private cases. They did not concern themselves at all with Caxton Hall or Albert Hall or Grotrian Hall or Clarendon Hall meetings; and all three—men of painstaking character—emphasised the actuality and power of telepathy. In fact F. W. Myers, in his book *Human Personality*, says: 'Telepathy, in short, must be the prerequisite of all these supernormal phenomena.'

'Actual experience, as we shall presently see, confirms this view of the place of telepathy. For when we pass from the induced to the spontaneous phenomena we shall find that these illustrate before all else this transmission of thought and emotion directly from mind to mind' (p. 183, one-volume edition).

The experiments conducted by Mr. Gurney, Professor Sidgwick, Dr. Herdman and others give convincing evidence of the actuality of telepathy. The private séances of Dennis Bradley, Lord Charles Hope, Madame Darel, Frau Maria von Bergen, Dr.

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Neville Whynant, Senhor Luiz de Mattos—these, too, afford multiplied examples of telepathy with their respective mediums.

If the attitude of mind of well-intentioned rev. gentlemen can influence adversely the production of spirit phenomena, so too can the dominating positive mind of any sitter at a private séance.

Putting aside for the moment the very questionable identity of such private 'guides' as *Imperator, Pheneas, White Hawk, Silver Birch, Pat O'Brien, Dr. Barnett, Uvani, Swiftfoot, Abduhl Latif* and pantomimic characters like *John King*, with their more questionable authority, we have presented to us by Spiritualists themselves, as excuses for faulty or fraudulent messages, quite a long list of explanations. To the Spiritualist these may seem *bona fide* excuses. To the non-Spiritualist they simply constitute further reasons for denying the genuineness of the alleged spirit messages.

In his *Study of Mediumship—Etude sur la Médiumnité*, Monsieur Wibin, a leading Belgian Spiritualist, editor of *Le Courrier Spirite Belge*, gives as an explanation of the incoherence of some spirit messages that it is due to a struggle between the 'spirit' who wants to control the medium and the medium who resists going under control. M. Wibin also trots forth another excuse: that of the absence of a fully sympathetic circle of sitters.

M. Bénézech, in an address on 'L'action combinée des médiums et des Esprits dans les phénomènes psychiques'—The combined action of both mediums and Spirits in psychic phenomena—talks about 'projections from the medium himself'; 'latent memory'; 'thought-transference'; 'the content of the subconscious mind of the medium'; the difficulties the spirits have to overcome since they must work in an atmosphere bristling with obstacles (*un milieu hérissé d'obstacles*). These latter, I suppose, include the 'intercosmic obstacles' of Professor Hyslop.

The list of obstacles against getting any genuine message through is a formidable one:

From the Summer Land:

1. The overwhelming preponderance of different astral influences (Frau von Bergen);
2. Fraud on the part of the Invisible Agent, with or without the consciousness of the medium (Du Prel);
3. Fraud on the part of the Invisible Agent without any concurrence on the part of the medium (Du Prel);
4. Mental suggestion from the Spirit Agent leading the medium to commit fraud (Gustav de Gaj);

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5. Undeveloped and tricky human spirits (Stainton Moses) ;
 6. Evil spirits as distinct from human earth-bound spirits (Mijnheer Beversluis, Frau Von Bergen, Monsieur Béziat, Mr. H. Dennis Bradley, etc.) ;
 7. Intercosmic obstacles (Hyslop, etc.) ;
 8. Other still more baffling impediments, unimaginable by us in our ignorance of what the conditions are in the spirit-world (Barrett).
- From the Circle :
9. Faulty linking of the sitters (Price, Bradley, etc.) ;
 10. Hostile element amongst the sitters (Moses, Oaten, Price) ;
 11. Doubting element amongst the sitters (Moses, Oaten) ;
 12. Evil affinities—' like attracts like ' (*passim*) ;
 13. Conflicting influences (*Lyceum Manual*) ;
 14. Cheating on the part of the sitters (G. B. Shaw) ;
 15. Unsympathetic attitude of the sitters (Wibin) ;
 16. Unconscious hints from the sitters (Hyslop) ;
 17. Manifold complications in the mental world affecting any access of outside influences at all (Hyslop) ;
 18. Atmospheric conditions (Moses, Price).
- On the part of the Medium :
19. Extreme susceptibility of the medium whose ' processus ' can be neutralised by a mere nothing (*un rien*) (Mme Darel) ;
 20. Bad health of the medium (Amor y Progreso) ;
 21. Physiological defects (Confederacion Española) ;
 22. The professional medium is likely to cheat for money (Confederacion Española, Amor y Progreso) ;
 23. Conscious fraud (*passim*) ;
 24. Unconscious fraud (*passim*) ;
 25. The very personality of the medium (waywardness, etc.).
- ' All communications are coloured more or less thereby ' (Kersey in *Lyceum Manual*) ;
26. Incomplete passivity of the medium (Wibin, Barrett) ;
 27. Incomplete development of the medium (*il faut consacrer des années à développer un médium*) (M. Delanne). [Note : M. Delanne declares that he and his friends spent *thirty years* trying to get genuine mediums ; and that they still found it difficult to get them] ;
 28. Resistance of the medium to spirit-control (Wibin) ;
 29. Wrong clothing worn by the medium (Wibin) ;
 30. Wrong jewelry worn by the medium (Wibin) ;
 31. Wrong colours used in séances (Wibin) ;
 32. Want of harmony between the vibrations of the medium and the manifesting spirits (Mme Darel) ;

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33. But the cream of all is given us by no less a spirit-guide than 'Red Cloud.'

'Red Cloud' manifests through the mediumship of one of England's most notable mediums, Mrs. Estelle Roberts. He also functions for a séance-circle at Douai, in France. He talks 'pidgin' English, French and Arabic; and his explanation of the fraudulent behaviour of a 'voice and materialising medium' who was caught producing 'spirit-music' standing in her stockinged-feet on a chair and playing a toy harp, was that the blatant fraud was due to the influence of 'Roman Catholic spirits from whom she had had trouble before' ! † !

And *that* was the explanation offered to Mr. Harry Price by the editor of a Spiritualist newspaper (*Leaves from a Psychist's Case-Book*).

'Eh! they're a bad lot them Cafflicks; even when they're dead they won't lie down.'

M. Bénézech was right. The whole business is *herisse d'obstacles*. I have endeavoured to indicate a few presented in Spiritualist writings. There may be more, not specialised, included in the 'intercosmic obstacles' of which we have no conception. Sufficient for my purpose are the thirty-three thereof. The list is a formidable one.

Even with those that are given we are left wondering whether there is ever a time when not one of these difficulties is present and we are definitely sure of an authentic and genuine message from a *really identifiable* human soul that has 'passed over.'

'Identifiable'—that is the important question. Were it possible at any séance, private or public, to secure complete absence of each and every one of the thirty-three obstacles listed above—intercosmic obstacles; adverse atmospheric conditions; fraud; telepathy; physiological defects; unsympathetic sitters; and the rest—there would still remain the nightmarish burden of proving the Identity of the communicating Intelligence.

Putting aside the phenomena that can be or might be explained as due to fraud, trickery, mal-observation, telepathy, etc., even the most confirmed materialist enquirer in the domain of Psychical Research is forced to admit that there is a residuum of phenomena that seem to be explainable only on the theory of the action of unknown Intelligences.

The Spiritualist theory is that these Intelligences are the souls of the departed (of those who have 'passed over').

Catholics—and others—are entitled to ask: '*Are they the souls*

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of the dead?' Have they ever been incontestably identified as such?

All but Spiritualists would answer: No.

Even amongst Spiritualists the question of the identity of the manifesting Intelligences is admitted to be the main difficulty, the crux of their position.

In his book *On the Threshold of a New World of Thought* Professor Sir William Barrett says: 'For my own part it seems not improbable that the bulk, if not the whole, of the physical manifestations witnessed in a spiritualistic séance, are the product of human-like, but not really human, intelligences.'

Spiritualists like to quote Sir William Crookes with regard to his experiences. We have an account of his conclusions given by Mr. de Vesme, who wrote a history of Spiritualism. He stated in *Annals*, July 1907: 'Lastly, we are obliged to recognise, with Spiritualist writers themselves, such as Myers and Aksakof, that we do not see how we can arrive at establishing, in a positive manner, the IDENTITY of a "spirit." . . . Moreover, why should we stick as obstinately to the spirit-hypothesis, properly so-called? We know that Sir William Crookes, for instance, whilst he asserts that he has not been able to identify the so-called spirits as souls of deceased persons, at least declares that he is persuaded that they are spirits independent of the psyche of the medium.'

Stainton Moses was a convinced Spiritualist. He is still held in very high esteem by Spiritualists. Yet he wrote: 'I am speaking to the esoteric body. . . . Speaking to such only, I desire to clear the ground by a few preliminary considerations, the more necessary because a considerable portion of this work is devoted to an exclusive argument dealing only with one side of the question—the return to earth of the spirits of departed humanity. I have no desire to stand committed to any narrow definition or limitation of the Intelligence at work, any more than I wish to ignore the great weight of evidence that goes to show that in a large number of cases the INTELLIGENT OPERATOR is NOT the person he pretends to be' (*Spirit Identity*, pp. 2, 3).

Professor Camille Flammarion, who also ranks high in the esteem of the Spiritualists, declared: 'The innumerable observations which I have collected during more than forty years, all prove to me the contrary. No satisfactory identification has been made' (*Mysterious Psychic Forces*, p. 436).

We have seen that serious investigators, some of them Spiritualists held in high esteem by their own community, repeatedly

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refer to 'personating spirits who as a hoax, or from malicious motives, or from a love of posturing under great names "fool us to the top of our bent" . . . vain creatures strutting in borrowed plumes—Shakespeares who cannot spell, Bacons who cannot convey consecutive ideas' (M.A. Oxon). Are these really the souls of our dead? Surely not; unless they be souls from hell.

In a leading article in *Light*, an official organ of Spiritualism, the editor admitted: 'It is a fact that we cannot gainsay, that *the hardest thing to prove "from the other side" is identity*. And we know of no test that can determine it' (March 13, 1909).

Such being the convictions of so many leaders of the Spiritualist movement, can Catholics be fairly condemned for rejecting the Spiritualistic claims?

So much for the 'Spirit-Messages'; but what are we to say about the PHYSICAL phenomena—levitation, apports, raps, 'spirit music,' trumpet voices and trumpet movements, etc.?

Again we study the attitude of Spiritualists themselves. Judging by the reports of séances and by advertisements that appear in the Spiritualist press, the general body of Spiritualists seem to consider such phenomena as highly evidential of spirit influence. On the other hand quite a few leading Spiritualists deem them to be of no value whatever; certainly of no value *in proving immortality*. It is in this line of phenomena that most frauds have been detected—they smack too much of conjuring and illusion. Most people can be taken in by conjurers or illusionists who work on a fully-lighted stage; how much easier is it to deceive in a faint light or in the dark.

'The claim that the banjo-playing and furniture shuffling, the antics and ineptitudes of the ordinary dark circle are the work of our departed friends who take this remarkable method of proving to us their continued life and happiness, is so monstrous that a well-balanced mind recoils in disgust as from a profanation and a blasphemy.'

These are not the words of a Catholic, nor of an opponent to Spiritualism; they are the considered judgment of the Reverend Stainton Moses (M.A. Oxon.), who remained an ardent Spiritualist to his death.

He condemns also all 'cabinet' phenomena and 'the whole method of conducting materialisation séances.' The latter he judges 'to be erroneous, calculated to introduce elements of uncertainty, and to produce the results which we are compelled again and again to deplore' (*Higher Aspects*, p. 16).

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He goes on : ' Of the moral aspects of such a procedure I will say nothing. It is a *fact well known to experienced Spiritualists* that the Spirits who are able to deal with gross matter so as to produce these physical manifestations are beings who are not possessed of a high moral consciousness' (*Higher Aspects*, p. 18).

When one reads of the minute preparations made for ' test ' materialisations, as, for instance, the exploratory examination of the medium Eva C. by Dr. Schrenk-Notzing and his associates, with the further detailed account of the parts of the medium's body from which the ' teleplasma ' (or ectoplasm) issued to form the materialised spirit, one is forced to ask : Granting, for argument's sake, that the phenomena are genuine manifestations from the spirit-world, are such the conditions that normally healthy-minded people would choose in order to get into touch once more with their beloved dead ? Is our ingrained sense of the holiness of heaven so low that we can conceive of no more reverential methods of communing with the dead than by tapping with tambourines, talking with trumpets, tarra-diddling with tables and tampering with naked mediums ?—Surely not.

So long as the bulk, if not the whole of the physical manifestations are ' not really human intelligences ' (Barrett), but ' spirits independent of the psyche of the medium ' (Crookes), and that ' in a large number of cases the Intelligent Operator is *not* the person he pretends to be (Moses) but rather ' the contrary ' (Flammarion), we Catholics feel we are on good ground when, with these scientific enquirers and Spiritualists themselves we say, that ' the hardest thing to prove is IDENTITY ' (*Light*), and that ' no satisfactory identification has been made ' (Flammarion).

We have seen how thought-transference can easily account for most of the messages given. We have seen what numerous obstacles there are against getting evidential messages. We have seen that even when genuine messages may be received there still remains the very great and unsolved problem of establishing the identity of the communicating spirit.

One other point remains to be considered, namely, the character of the messages.

We have seen in the chapter on the ' Summer Land ' how contradictory they can be in their descriptions of life beyond the veil. The contradictoriness is evident from the passages given. Not only are they contradictory, they are so vague, so wanting in

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precision, so untrustworthy, and so frequently lying, as to be valueless.

'Is there a lady here who knows Pierre, a French boy who stayed in London before the war?' asks Sergeant William Ellis, R.A.S.C. 'Yes,' says a lady from the back of the hall, and learns that Pierre is saying, in broken English, that he is unhappy about her health.' Thus we read in *Illustrated* (Jan. 1, 1944), in an article 'Mediums take the Platform,' at the Caxton Hall, Westminster.

There may easily have been a hundred boys of the name of 'Pierre' in London before the war—'Pierre' is nearly as common a name for French boys as is 'Jean.' Why could not Sgt. Ellis give the boy's *surname*?

Mrs. Flavell followed her teacher, Mrs. Rolfe (from the London School of Psychology). She pointed to the middle of the *empty aisle*. 'I've got a boy here—an Air Force boy—saying he wants someone by the name of Winifred.' No surname again. It would be interesting to know why. It is no use advancing the excuse that the meeting was a public one, and therefore the full names could not be given with propriety. We find exactly the same vagueness is evident in private séances.

Here is a short extract from a sitting that Dennis Bradley had with Miss Hazel Ridley, an American trance medium. Miss Ridley's 'guide' is an Indian of the name of 'Gray Wolf.' In this séance the messages were supposed to be spoken by the spirit communicator himself after he took control of the medium.

Medium: 'Gert—Gertie—Gertrude—wants Mary.'

Mrs. Austin Harrison (*whose name is Marie, asked*) 'Do you want me?'

Medium: 'Yes. (*Floundering about*) Mother's here.'

Mrs. Harrison (*querying—her mother being alive*).

Medium: 'Mary's mother.'

Mrs. Harrison could not place 'Mary's mother,' so the medium tried something else.

Medium: 'Gertie.'

We then asked who Gertie wanted to speak to.

Medium: 'Quite young—when she went over.'

None of us could claim a young Gertie who went over.

Medium: 'I will open a way for the others.'

Medium: (*a minute or two later, whispering*): 'Elisabeth.'

We tried to find out who Elisabeth was, but did not succeed.

And so on, and so on, with attempts at Henry, Hetty, Edie,

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Elisabeth again, Maurice, and Mary's father, whose name could not be given (. . . *And After*, pp. 278-279).

Mrs. Mona Rolfe, Director of the London School of Psychology, 'stabbed her finger at a man with a lean face and untidy grey hair. "There is a gentleman here with a very strong creative force behind him. Have you done any sort of creative work?"

"No," replied the gentleman.

'Mrs. Rolfe pursed her lips. "Any drawing, something creative with your hands?" she queried.

"I work with my hands."

"You've been frustrated and held back. I feel there is something you are trying to grasp and you are putting a cloud around yourself."

Perhaps one ought not to be too severe in one's judgment on that séance, because, as Mr. Alan Reeve, the writer of the report, informs us, Mrs. Rolfe said: 'I really started these Sunday services to get a platform for my students to practise on.'

Several questions suggest themselves in regard to that statement: (1) Was Lord Dowding invited to act as chairman in order to be practised on? (2) Is a large hall crowded with all types of people, and thus about the worst place for obtaining evidential psychic phenomena, the best place for practising? (3) It takes years to develop a medium, says M. Delanne. Is it quite the thing, then, to put *pupils* on the platform for a *public Sunday service*? If such meetings would need, as Mr. Horace Leaf declared, 'a perfect Samson among clairvoyants to give successful descriptions and spirit messages,' what hope could there be for the general public to get anything else beyond such useless stuff as: 'Tell her that he comes home very often, and would she please leave the photograph where it was first' (*Illustrated*, Jan. 1, 1944).

Blackpool-shore 'gypsies' could do as good, if not better. Is that sort of thing *religion*? Would even the singing of 'Nearer, my God, to Thee,' with a subsequent rendering of a vocal solo, 'Hear my Prayer' (Mendelssohn), make it a service that truly constituted worship of the Almighty God?

'Power,' the spirit guide of Mrs. Meurig Morris, gives an exhibition at the Fortune Theatre, Covent Garden. 'Great crowds again flocked' there. 'Though the doors of the theatre were timed not to open till 6 P.M., queues began to form at 11 A.M.' The subject of the discourse to be given by 'Power' was chosen by a member of the staff of the *Daily Mail*; we presume that the

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Daily Mail has a department of specialists in theology. Any way, 'Power's' address 'was followed with rapt attention'—was it rapt bewilderment? because 'Power's' addresses are difficult for a reporter to follow. . . . His sentences, too, are often lengthy and involved, whilst the rapid flow of his language is remarkable' (*The Two Worlds*, Feb. 6, 1931).

Reporters are supposed to be trained to report. A reporter from the staff of the *Daily Mail* (not a 'correspondent,' mark you) should be up to his job. And in this instance the reporter chose the subject of the address. Yet all we are told in *The Two Worlds* is—not what the subject was; nor what 'Power' said about it—but that "'Power's' addresses are difficult for a reporter to follow'

Surely we may presume that the reporter chose a subject about which he knew something, even if only a little. I, personally, would think he would propose a test-subject; something about which he knew a good deal. It would seem that both the medium and her spirit-guide 'Power' got lost; hence the 'lengthy and involved' sentences and the remarkably 'rapid flow of language.'

Further, if the *Daily Mail* reporter could not follow a discourse on a subject he himself had chosen, what chance had the audience which packed the theatre?

We are told that the address 'left a deep impression on the audience.'

I think it would.

Now we can understand why Stainton Moses declared, with regard to public séances, that the medium at such gatherings 'can give no trustworthy evidence' (*Higher Aspects*, p. 18). Now we can believe him when he says: 'It is a common cause of complaint amongst us that the communications received . . . are of an unsatisfactory nature. It is said that they are frequently trivial, contradictory, foolish (if not worse) and not such as command respect. . . . I am anxious not to overstate the argument. . . . Is it not so? I am disposed to think it is' (*Higher Aspects*, p. 88).

Here is another witness, quite up to date and modern—the late Mr. H. Dennis Bradley. He says: 'When the medium starts to fish for information by asking questions of the sitter, in order to get a line to work upon, one may be safe in assuming the medium is not genuine.'

At Mrs. Rolfe's meeting at the Caxton Hall it seemed to be all fishing:

'Is there a lady here who knows Pierre?' asks Sergeant Ellis.

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'Have you done any creative work?'—Any drawing, something creative with your hands?' queries the Director of the London School of Psychology, Mrs. Rolfe.

'I've got a boy here—an Air Force boy—saying he wants someone by the name of Winifred,' is the fishing remark of Mrs. Rolfe's pupil (Mrs. Margaret Flavell).

Surely to goodness 'Pierre' and the 'Air Force boy' did not travel sixty million miles to endeavour to get in touch with someone, out of a population of seven million, whose surname they did not know, and who might or might not have been at the Caxton Hall that evening!

Accuracy, precision, means of identification, solid knowledge—all these are missing from the spirit messages. Instead we are presented with contradictory reports, vague generalities, banalities, forgotten surnames and truly Delphic equivocal utterances. No wonder Professor Joad wrote, with regard to such messages: 'One is driven to the conclusion that, even if ghosts have souls, they certainly have no brains.'

AND WHO IS TO KNOW, ESPECIALLY AT A PUBLIC SÉANCE, WHETHER OR NOT THE MEDIUM HAS A CONFEDERATE—OR CONFEDERATES—IN THE BODY OF THE HALL TO GIVE A HELPING HAND, SHOULD 'BLACK DEVIL' OR 'SCALPING KNIFE' FAIL IN HIS TASK, BECAUSE A DOZEN OR MORE OF THE THIRTY-THREE OBSTACLES CONFRONT THE MEDIUM?

V

'WHISTLE, AND I'LL COME'

'So Spiritualism is "all my eye and Betty Martin"?'

Well, *not quite*.

'But you have just tried to make out a case to prove that there is no genuine communication with the dead.'

With *the dead*, yes; as far as the dead died as the friends of Almighty God. But please do not overlook the possibility that there may be other spirits in the life-to-come besides the souls of the dead. Don't forget what I quoted already from M. de Vesme, or from Sir William Crookes, or from Sir William Barrett.

Professor Barrett says: 'For my own part it seems not improbable that *the bulk, if not the whole*, of the physical manifestations witnessed in a spiritualistic séance, are the product of human-like, *but not really human*, intelligences.'

De Vesme asks: 'Why should we stick so obstinately to the spirit-hypothesis properly so called? We know that Sir William Crookes, for instance, whilst he asserts that he has not been able to identify the so-called spirits as souls of deceased persons, at least declares that *he is persuaded that they are spirits independent of the psyche of the medium*.'

What do these three men mean if not that there are other spirits besides those who are the souls of the dead? They may not make any allusion to the evil character of these 'human-like, but not really human, intelligences,' but others, who believe in the actuality of spirit-communication, do point out the evil nature of manifesting spirits.

The late H. Dennis Bradley in the course of describing his chats with his pet medium, George Valiantine, said: 'I alluded to my experiences when genuine phenomena had occurred and yet at the same time the "voice" phenomena had obviously been produced by impersonating entities. I recounted to him certain experiences when *evil influences* had affected the results' (. . . *And After*, p. 367).

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Again, he says (p. 394) : ' It is unquestionable that in the lower grades of mediumship there are innumerable evil, lying and impersonating entities seeking channels of communication, with the result that many séances which are held are of a degrading character, and in such cases the practice is unhealthy and morbid.'

Mijnheer Beversluis, a minister of the Dutch Reformed Church and a most ardent Spiritualist, in his lecture on ' The rôle of Spiritualism in the religious evolution of humanity,' declared : ' As to the doctrine of Parseeism—that of the perpetual conflict of evil with good—of evil spirits with good spirits, that we find in all the monotheistic religions, in Judaism, in Islamism and Christianity, in the doctrine of the existence of Satan and the devils, who fight God and His angels, *Spiritualism has revealed that there really is a fight between pure and impure spirits, that there are diabolic spirits that hate God.*'

Mijnheer Beversluis is not the only reverend gentleman who espoused the cause of Spiritualism. There are too many others from Nonconformity and from the Church of England. Amongst the latter the Rev. William Stainton Moses stands out head and shoulders, a very Saul amongst the prophets, above the rest. Mr. Moses, whilst endeavouring to make out as strong a case as he could against the existence of the Devil and his angels, was forced to admit, as a conclusion from his own Spiritualistic experiences, that they are not only the souls of the dead who manifest at séances. ' It is not for me to deny,' he wrote, ' that there are at work in Spiritualism *agencies other than the departed souls of our kind*' (*Spirit Identity*, p. 18).

In his other book, *Higher Aspects of Spiritualism* (pp. 47-48), he writes of spirits ' who seem to be on a lower plane than our own ; others are destitute of moral consciousness ' ; and as an alternative to their being merely human spirits ' fond of a hoax,' he declares they must be ' demons : devils in short, emissaries of Satan ' ; and he adds : ' I do not see why such a devil as Calvinists, Puritans and the narrow school of Evangelicals believe in should not account, on the most comprehensive principles, for the whole mystery of evil.'

There is the point : ' on the most comprehensive principles '—*that* is the very situation that is burked and avoided. Mr. Stainton Moses avoids it himself by denying the existence of the devil. He is content to call them ' malicious spirits ' and ' tricky spirits ' and ' agencies other than the departed spirits of our kind.' So do Spiritualists in general argue that these ' not really human intelli-

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gences’; these ‘spirits independent of the psyche of the medium’; these ‘evil influences’ of whom Dennis Bradley speaks; these spirits ‘who seem to be on a lower level than our own,’ are not devils, but only ‘earth-bound spirits’—i.e. human souls of low degree who have passed over, but who still cling, on account of their evil earthly lives, to earthly attractions.

To follow out the purpose of this book, which is to warn those who may be tempted to dabble with Spiritualism as to the kind of spirits they may contact, it might be useful to see what Spiritualists themselves have to say further of the character of these earth-bound beings.

For the moment we shall set aside the question as to whether or not they are devils in the theological meaning of the word, and consider them solely as ‘evil spirits.’

The hesitant would-be enquirer can then put the question to himself as to whether they are the type of beings with whom anyone would really care to get in touch and to trust.

To begin with we must keep in mind that the majority—if not all—of Spiritualist writers insist on stating that death does not bring about an immediate change of character in the soul of the person who passes over.

Andrew Jackson Davies declared in his *Diakka and their Victims*: ‘Death does not change the character of a man, but simply strips off his masks and compels him to stand forth as he is, and he becomes after death the image of his own character.’

Dr. J. M. Peebles, commenting on this passage, wrote: ‘How true this independent clairvoyant’s words! “Death does not change character.” Are there no evil-minded, incorrigibly malignant persons in this world? Only the semi-brainless can rationally deny it. There must, therefore, be such undeveloped, conscienceless beings in the world of spirits’ (*Demonism of the Ages*, p. 19).

Two pages farther on he quotes with approval the words of Hudson Tuttle: ‘All spiritual beings were once human beings, and according to the fundamental principles of Spiritualism, by passing through the gateway of death have met with no change, except such as they have gained by growth. Hence they are as good and as evil as they were here, no more, no less.

‘If there are evil persons in this life there are in the next, and IF WE OPEN THE WAY FOR THEIR APPROACH AND ALLOW THEM TO INFLUENCE US, WE MUST EXPECT THEM TO MANIFEST THE SAME QUALITIES WHICH DISTINGUISHED THEM IN EARTH-LIFE.’

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Dr. J. M. Peebles, that late veteran American Spiritualist, sent me, 'with good wishes,' an autographed copy of his *Demonism of the Ages, Spirit Obsessions so common in Spiritism, Oriental and Occidental Occultism*, in which he had marked off several passages in order to call my attention to them. (Italics his.)

After describing luridly the various types of inhabitants of this earth, with its '400,000,000 almond-eyed semi-enlightened Chinese; some 250,000,000 plague-stricken, polygamy-practising, child-marrying, superstitious people of India; 200,000,000 ignorant, scantily-clad African negroes, with cannibal tribes in the central regions . . . scheming, gold-clutching millionaires of America; Whitechapel murderers of London, travelling road-side tramps and thieves; night-walking outcast men and women that infest the cities; the liars, gamblers, unprincipled tricksters, slum-saloon patrons, wild, dazed, insane; criminals in jails and penitentiaries; intriguing, morally-perjured politicians,' he adds: '—these—all these are swept with the black besom-wing of death into the spirit world! They are spirits—discarnate spirits now—but are they pure?—are they good? If so, what has made them so? Was it the last death-gasp? Is death a savior? Does dying inject, or transmit with a flash, beneficence and wisdom into a stupid African cannibal? Does death clean off the slate, making philosophers of idiots, and saints of savages? *Are there no evil spirits just over the border?*

'If not, then spirit-identity is a fallacy—a gigantic delusion.'

Then follows the first marked passage: 'These countless millions above-named, divested of their mortal vestures, are now spirits, yet in tendency and sentiment, they are still of the earth, earthy.'

Of course we never hear a word from Spiritualists who organise or hold the weekly meetings of this sort of evil spirit-entity ever manifesting at their public séances. When the Great Metropolitan Spiritualist Association advertises its séances at which there is 'Healing by SWIFTFOOT,' who may have been a first-class hand at scalping in his earth-life, we are not warned that public séances are, according to men like Peebles and Stainton Moses, the very type of occasion for earth-bound spirits to manifest. Nor does the Marylebone Spiritualist Association Ltd. (I like the 'Ltd.') put us on our guard against the possibility of the mediums they have engaged being fraudulent, and therefore the more likely to attract lying spirits. No; we are not advised of these possible dangers. All the spirits who manifest at the 3,000

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weekly meetings are presumed to be *good spirits*; all ready to produce phenomena ‘on tap.’

Can these Associations, whether Ltd. or not, guarantee that no earth-bound, lying or tricky spirits will rush in to be present at their meetings? Are there no spirit gate-crashers? After all, it is not only in the U.S.A. that evil spirits abound to trouble séances. We must not overlook Dr. Peebles’ allusion to the ‘Whitechapel murderers of London’; and as spokesman for this side of the Atlantic we have the Rev. William Stainton Moses, M.A. (Oxon.)

This reverend gentleman referred in his *Spirit Identity* (p. 2) to the DIFFICULTIES OF INVESTIGATION, and said, regarding séances: ‘The gates are set ajar, and a motley company enters.’ He repeats this description of the manifesting entities on page twelve, heading the section in capitals:

‘THE GATES BEING AJAR, A MOTLEY CROWD RUSHES IN.

‘The world from which disembodied spirits return to us is very much like our own. The denizens of it are of varying degrees of progression; and those, unfortunately for us, who are least progressive, least developed, and most material and earthly, hover around the confines, and rush in when the gates are set ajar.

‘*Our criminals we have always with us.*

‘The dwellers in our lanes and alleys, for whom we make a decent life impossible; the victims of our lusts and debaucheries, whom our conditions of life drive, like the poor sheep that they are, to inevitable sin and shame—these scapegoats of advanced civilisation . . . these we have too, answering the first call, only too ready to come back to the only place they care for.

‘They who have lived the life of incarnation without progress: they who have hoarded their treasure here, and have no *home* elsewhere; they who are tied to earth by any of the bonds that chain down the spirit; they for whom heaven has no meaning, and who would find their highest gratification on the earth they should have quitted for ever; those, in short, whom we by our vicious civilisation, by all the methods whereby worldly wealth and power preys on and degrades those who are the ministers of its lusts and material cravings and necessities; those whom we have reduced to the level of mere physical machines, and robbed of the precious birthright of spiritual progress and true life—*these find the gates ajar and vex us.* . . . What does Holy Writ

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say? "He that is unjust is unjust still; and he that is filthy is filthy still." Carry on the argument, and the conclusion is inevitable. We have elements set loose from this world of ours day by day, endowed too, with perpetuated life and energy, sufficient to make it not only probable but *certain* that, *once we establish communication with the disembodied state, they will return to vex and harass us, AS WE KNOW THEY DO.*'

If this be the actual state of affairs; if the statements of these leading exponents of Spiritualism be true—and there would seem to be little reason to doubt that they were honest in writing as they did; for, after all, they were downright ardent advocates of the cause of Spiritualism—again I ask: why, why, why, in the face of such statements, made by such men, as to the evil nature of the spirits who are first on the spot to manifest, why is it taken for granted that all the phenomena at private, and especially at public sêances are the work of *good* spirits?

Illustrated, in its issue for January 1, 1944, declared that 'Once again the Spiritualist movement stands in the limelight. Every Sunday almost 3,000 Spiritualist groups meet in churches and halls throughout England. Thousands of converts hold sêances in their homes.' Are we to believe, after reading what Jackson Davis, Peebles and Stainton Moses have written, that all these thousands of groups and private circles never contact an evil spirit? If such malicious intelligences do *not* manifest, why are so many warning instructions given by the *Lyceum Manual*, Stainton Moses and people like Mr. Harry Boddington? Why are there people like Dr. Carl Winnick for 'driving out obsessions through mediumship'?—those 'obsessions *so common* in Spiritism,' as Dr. Peebles puts it in italics on the title-page of his book?

Those '3,000 Spiritualist groups,' which *Illustrated* distinguishes from the private circles, are the very type that are denounced by the more respectable leaders of Spiritualism. Such groups hold their sêances under what are termed 'bad conditions,' the *worst* conditions; conditions condemned repeatedly by more honest Spiritualists.

Apart from my own conviction (which would count for nothing with the believing Spiritualist) but relying solely on the denunciations of such types of meetings as have been uttered by their own protagonists, I would say, emphatically, that if evil, malicious, lying spirits ever manifest they must do so at such gatherings.

The 'conditions' are all bad: the professional medium engaged, who is, in the words of Conan Doyle, 'the curse of the

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movement’; the promiscuity of the people drawn to the séance: the frivolous, the merely curious, the sceptical—and that very class who should keep away: the broken-hearted, the bereaved, the anxious, the unbalanced; all of whom Oliver Lodge and Stainton Moses warned off, as ‘their judgment is uncritical’; the cool, calculated presumed claim to be able to secure phenomena immediately the medium goes into action, Sunday after Sunday, or any time on any day that is advertised.

Those who have studied the literature on the subject and who have not been content to get all their information from such papers as *Psychic News* know perfectly well that the most famous mediums—those of English, Continental and Trans-Atlantic repute—have repeatedly failed at séances to get any results at all. Are we to believe, then, that the professionals like the Baylises, the Murphey-Lydys, the Duncans, the Hamiltons can get results any time they like?

The organisers of such meetings must know the odds are against genuine phenomena occurring under such conditions, and therefore must be prepared to sanction fraud, lest their patrons go away disappointed—and the Association *Ltd.* would be faced with a financial loss. If they are ready to pass off the fraudulent for the genuine their motives are bad; and should any spirit really manifest in the course of the session it would in all probability be an evil one.

To back up this judgment on the matter I quote once more from *Spirit Identity* (p. 16): ‘Too often what happens is this: a number of persons assemble, most of them densely ignorant of any conditions to be observed; some animated by mere curiosity, a few by a dumb desire to see what can be had through the only course open to them as evidence of a future life: *all*, in nine cases out of ten, *unfit, for one or more of many causes*, for the solemn work they have undertaken. The link between the two worlds, the line that the Intelligent Operator must use, is out of order, over-wrought, in anything but a satisfactory condition. How should it be otherwise? Anyone who can spare five shillings runs to him for proof of immortality! The burden is more than he can bear; and if he be a model of integrity, a very storehouse of psychic power, he becomes distressed and broken down. His nerves are shattered, he is open to the assaults of all the malicious, tricky spirits that his vocation brings him in contact with, and, as a consequence, he is in grievous peril—through our ignorance and folly as much as through the ever-present danger of his

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vocation—of moral, or mental, or physical deterioration. Then comes the necessary sequel; temptation, obsession, fraud, buffoonery, and all that we so lament as associated with phenomenal Spiritualism.

‘These are the circumstances under which a large proportion of those who desire to gather evidence respecting the intercourse between the two worlds are forced to get it. I repeat that *I am astonished that any evidence should be worth counting that is produced under such conditions*; and I do not wonder that, *as a rule*, the evidence is faulty, and that the conditions set up and perpetuated by us result in much that is discreditable, and even shameful.

‘In so saying, I have in mind many a scandal that has brought shame on the cause I advocate.’

It is amazing to me that anyone who has read widely and studiously the literature of Spiritualism could lend his or her name and presence to the fostering of these promiscuous public séances in the Caxton Hall or any other hall. Seeing the picture of Lord Dowding at the late Caxton Hall meeting, apparently telling the photographer to ‘Get on with it,’ I asked myself: ‘*Qu’est-ce qu’il est allé faire dans cette galère ?*’

There you have it: at such meetings the medium ‘is open to the assaults of all the malicious, tricky spirits that his vocation brings him in contact with.’ Andrew Jackson Davis, Hudson Tuttle, Stainton Moses, Dr. Peebles—one after another—all declaring that there is an enormous cloud of evil witnesses, ‘a motley crowd,’ ready to rush in as soon as the gates between this world and the next are set ajar by the forming of a séance-circle.

But the puzzle is: why do all these people content themselves with describing these evil Intelligences as merely malicious, lying spirits, possibly sub-human, ‘agencies other than the departed spirits of our kind’? Why can they not go further and admit that they are *devils* in the orthodox theological sense? After all, Dr. Peebles and Stainton Moses claimed to be Christian clergymen; ought not the word of Jesus Christ to be good enough for them? What difference does it really make to the cause of Spiritualism to admit the existence of the devil and his angels when they so openly admit the existence of hordes of evil, malicious, lying and obsessional earth-bound spirits who are the like of Satan in their influence and character?

Accepting, for argument’s sake—though I hate to have to put it so—the Spiritualists’ description of Jesus as ‘the greatest

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medium that ever lived,' what do we find in reading any of the four accounts of His life—the four Gospels? We find this: that He believed in the existence of the devil and his angels; He taught that they existed; He claimed the power to exorcise them, and also the ability to pass on that power to His disciples. His very mission on earth, as St. John tells us, was 'to destroy the works of the devil—*ἵνα λύσῃ τὰ ἔργα τοῦ διαβόλου*.'

Voltaire put St. John's statement in another form: 'Pas de Sathan, pas de Sauveur.'—If there is no devil, then there is no need for a Saviour.

The test for those early Christians who were converted from superstitious surroundings was to 'Try the spirits,' and if those spirits (devils) who then manifested denied the divinity of Christ they were anathema, *i.e.* accursed.

And there lies, in my judgment, the keynote of the Spiritualist movement, *viz.* the denial of the Divinity of Jesus Christ.

Stainton Moses wrote at a time when England was more Christian than it is now; and he penned these words in *Spirit Identity* (p. 22): 'Ever since I became intimately acquainted with the subject, I have been deeply impressed with some serious considerations respecting it.

'One is, *there is an organised plan on the part of the spirits who govern these manifestations . . . to act on us and on the religious thought of the age.*'

Those words are as true to-day as ever they were. Note the words: ever since he became intimately acquainted with Spiritualism he had that *deep* impression of *an organised plan* on the part of the spirits to act on the religious thought of the age. Hence we can understand the fulminations of M. le Clément de St. Marcq against the Church; the belittling of the value of faith in the teaching of Christ that is common to so many Spiritualists; the rejection of the Bible by so many others; and the extreme case of the late A. J. Smyth (once a Spiritualist Lyceum leader) who, in a letter to me, could describe the Almighty as 'that hydra-headed monster called the Christian God.'

Hence we can understand how a correspondent could write in *Psychic News* (Nov. 27, 1943):

'Silver Birch says the Nazarene was a great teacher. If the Bible is to be believed he was a great teacher and the greatest medium ever. . . . *As for Silver Birch's teachings being at variance with the Christian belief, thank God they are!*'

'Silver Birch,' by the way, is an alleged spirit-guide of Hannen

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Swaffer's home circle. He seems to have dethroned 'White Shadow,' the chief guide of the circle. He is a pantheistic North American Indian (§).

Isn't it astounding? Isn't it perplexing to think that people who would call themselves sane can prefer the teaching of quondam scalp-hunting, savage 'braves,' WHOM NOBODY CAN IDENTIFY NOR PROVE TO HAVE EVER EXISTED, to that of Jesus Christ?

Quos deus vult perdere prius dementat.

The movement appears to be one of the attacks of Antichrist—it is anti-Christ. Let us consider again those portentous words of Stainton Moses: 'There is an organised plan on the part of the spirits who govern these manifestations . . . to act on us and on the religious thought of the age.' That is the whole situation. If these spirits were merely the souls of the dead, why should they bother about the religious thoughts of those on earth? We have been told that whatever religion a man belongs to in this life will be his religion beyond the grave. But we see how the plan acts. It attempts to change the man's religion in *this* life if he takes up Spiritualism.

Dr. J. M. Peebles wrote at the age of 92 a brief account of his conversion to belief in Spiritualism. He described his reluctance to take any notice of the 'rappings' then becoming common at Auburn, U.S.A. Finally he went to consult a female medium. The raps and the vibrations both astonished and horrified him. 'When I got back to my study I tried to get rid of all thoughts of "spirits." It was impossible. True enough, I had preached eloquently of the future life, immortal life, and now that the spirits had come and proved the truth of my preaching I was annoyed and almost angry with them; because they had turned my religious beliefs upside down' (p. 58).

Mijnheer Beversluis: 'Formerly I believed that Jesus was the second person of the Trinity'—now he believes that no more.

'Never did Jesus Christ claim to be God!' says Captain Volpi.

And Stainton Moses devoted a whole chapter in his *Higher Aspects of Spiritualism* which he entitled 'LOSS AND GAIN.' Here is a man, educated and well read, a clergyman of the Church of England, who once recited, Sunday after Sunday, the Nicene Creed, and thirteen times a year the Athanasian Creed, before his congregation; and through his adoption of Spiritualist practices he gave up belief in the Trinity of God, in the Divinity of Christ, in the existence of the Holy Ghost, in the Atonement and Redemp-

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tion through the shedding of Christ’s Blood on Calvary. ‘We have lost a God-man, but we have gained a model man, *all but divine*.’ Like Lady Emily Lutyens, who said with regard to the Krishnamurti humbug stunt: ‘There must be anarchy before there can be creation’ (*Herald of the Star*, March 1927), so Moses declared: ‘The work of destruction must necessarily precede the work of construction.’

So all is plain: the organised plan of the spirits to work on the religious thought of the day was to be by the way of destruction—destruction of true Christian faith, and especially of Catholic faith; destroy all belief in the idea of Jesus as God-Incarnate, then people will take His authority as being of only a wee bit more value than Mahomet’s; and so the world can believe what it likes and behave as it likes, and nobody need bother himself about anything.

If that plan is not, to the truly Christian mind at least, the work of the devil, one is justified in asking: what is?

Some reader may retort: ‘Yes, that may be true of the general trend of the movement, but WHERE DOES THE DIABOLIC INFLUENCE COME IN WITH REGARD TO SÉANCES? HOW FAR ARE THE PHENOMENA OF SPIRITUALISM DUE TO DEMONIC OR SATANIC AGENCY?’

Much as they may seem to be alike these are two distinct questions, each having its bearing on the subject of this chapter.

1. There is the influence exercised to attract people to frequent séances or to ‘try for themselves,’ and be impressed. This may lead to a continuance of attendance or to a repetition of experimenting at home.

2. There is the question of the *actual agency* of the devil in producing the phenomena.

In other words, we are asked to discuss (a) the REMOTE influence and (b) the IMMEDIATE influence of Satan in Spiritualism.

(a) REMOTE INFLUENCE: According to all true and historic Christian teaching there exists outside this material world, in which we live and move and have our being, a world of spirits both good and bad.

God is the Supreme Spirit who alone exists of Himself, and is infinite in all perfections.

There are the good Spirits, commonly called Angels—though the Angels are only one class of the nine choirs of pure Spirits—who are the creatures and the servants of Almighty God.

There are the evil spirits, who are called devils; these are the enemies of God.

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The Sacred Scriptures are full of references to the existence of both good and evil spirits ; and the New Testament tells us that 'our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the world of this darkness, against the spirits of wickedness in high places'—therefore St. Paul's converts at Ephesus were advised to take unto them 'the shield of faith, wherewith you may be able to extinguish all the fiery darts of the most wicked one.'

That 'shield of faith' is the very protection of which Satan would deprive mankind through Spiritualism. Forgetting, or ignoring, the words of Jesus Christ : 'Blessed are they that have not seen, and have believed,' Spiritualists actually sneer at faith, and would have all men become as 'doubting Thomases.' We are asked to stake our belief in a future life on the fraudulent phenomena of such notorious fake-mediums as the widely celebrated Eva C., Mrs. Duncan, George Valiantine, Rudi Schneider, Mrs. Murphey Lydy, Harold Evans, Mrs. Hamilton, Mrs. Baylis, Jean Guzik, Miss Hazel Ridley, Stanislaw P., and so on, and so on ; or else to base it on the alleged teachings of unidentifiable Red Indians and Arabs.

Spiritualists seem not to recognise the difference between divine faith and simple credulity. 'As for Silver Birch's teachings being at variance with the Christian belief, thank God they are' !

Our Lord Jesus Christ described Satan as the father of lies. St. John wrote : 'He that committeth sin is of the devil : for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God appeared that He might destroy the works of the devil.'

The work of the devil is the luring away of human beings from the love and service of God ; and this is done by destroying belief in the divinity of Christ whom He hath sent, and by setting at naught the value of the Redemption by Christ's Atonement.

In order to secure that rejection of Jesus Christ as Redeemer and Saviour any and every means of seduction is used by Satan and his associate wicked spirits : appeals to pride, lust, envy, jealousy, love of money, curiosity, and every human weakness.

Of these the least reprehensible (in one sense), the least deterrent, and the one most common to men and women, is CURIOSITY.

'Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.' And the surrender to that appeal 'to know' all brought sin into this world, and with sin, death.

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It was the debasement of human intelligence (or *reason*), that greatest gift of God to man, that very gift that marks man off from the brute creation, which called for such a penalty.

As part of our rational nature we are always wanting to know—even if it is only the winner of the 3.30. Curiosity leads many Eves to read their husbands’ letters. Curiosity entices young people to pry into books not intended for adolescents—and the surrender to the temptation of curiosity has much to answer for. Unfortunately we too often want to know the wrong things.

The human will is ordained to choose *good*. When it decides on the choice of what is evil, that is because the evil presents itself, for the moment of choice, as something good—an advantage to well-being, or pocket, or knowledge. Satan being an intellectual being, knows this. With his experience of what human nature is and of what human minds long for, and knowing that the human will revolts from *evil as evil*, he can easily work on the chief weakness of any human being in order to lead him or her away from God.

Spiritualists claim to have proved that discarnate spirits can communicate their thoughts to human minds; what, then, is there to prevent evil spirits who have never been incarnate and who are of a higher intellectual nature from doing likewise? What is more likely than that they should exploit the curiosity of the bereaved and others as to what happens to the human soul after death?

When to that curiosity to know what is hidden from us by God there is added the attraction of mystery and the lure of the occult, what more enticing temptation could the devil use? The fortune-telling element apart, there is attached to it no danger of arrest for breach of the civil law; it is free from the grossness that repels many from sensual sins; it leads to no infringement of a neighbour’s rights—it all *seems* so harmless, so simple, so natural, so above-board, and so very removed from sin.

Hence to the Catholic mind it is just the very type of temptation the devil would use.

The actual results of loss of Christian faith through dabbling in Spiritualism bear ample testimony to the strength of this argument as to the ‘remote’ influence of the devil (p. 15).

(b) There is another influence, which is IMMEDIATE or DIRECT.

Here we state the sound Catholic principle which is used in the testing of miracles, namely: never to postulate the supernatural until all known possible explanations have been exhausted.

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When that has been done each individual case must be considered on the *full* evidence given.

Where that evidence proves conclusively that no explanation by way of fraud or trickery or mal-observation or telepathy or any other *natural* hypothesis can account for the phenomena, then we are left with the only conclusion which remains : that the cause is *supernatural* ; and if the results are of an *evil* nature, then the supernatural agency is of the devil.

It might be objected : But why not allow that it may be the work of some discarnate human soul ? It *might* be . . . but such a manifesting 'spirit' could only be one from hell.

Catholic doctrine concerning Heaven is : that Heaven is a state of ineffable happiness wherein the soul enjoys the supreme reward of the Vision of God. 'Now we see in a glass darkly,' says St. Paul, 'but then face to face.' I put it to any reader who claims to be a true Christian yet hovers on the brink of the pit of Spiritualism : what soul entranced by the Vision of God would wish to leave *that* for the darkened séance-room in order to tap people on the head with a celluloid trumpet or to ring all the plated bells on a Christmas-tree at once ?

On the admission of Spiritualists themselves, as we have seen, many of the messages are futile, deceiving or lying ; and, as such, are wickedly cruel when the deception is practised on people recently bereaved.

Again, experimenters with the planchette can testify, by the score, to the obscene, filthy and blasphemous messages received. The late Mr. Godfred Raupert, once an ardent believer in Spiritualism, told me how his dabbling with the planchette made both himself and his wife downright ill through the foulness of the messages they received. All was fair, 'uplifting' and innocuous to begin with ; but the later results were horrifying—and that led him to enter the Catholic Church as the only Christian body that, as far as he knew, condemned Spiritualism outright.

Gilbert K. Chesterton told Fr. O'Connor that he used to experiment with the planchette quite frequently at one time, but that later he gave it up because it gave him headaches followed by 'a horrid feeling as if one were trying to get over a bad spree, with what he could best describe as a bad smell in the mind' (*Gilbert Keith Chesterton*, by Maisie Ward, p. 45).

Are such the results or the consoling words one would expect from spirits who had come direct from the Presence of God Who is infinite purity and truth ?

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Someone might ask: ‘Might they not be souls from Purgatory?’

One would need to have a low conception of what Purgatory means to be able to entertain for a moment, seriously, that that could be the explanation. The souls in Purgatory are the prisoners of God’s love and mercy. They are not free to manifest at the beck and call of the Mrs. Rolles or Mrs. Duncans, nor of all the bereaved and the merely curious. They are expiating forgiven sins, and such is their intense love of God that they would be most unlikely ready to induce their friends who are still on earth to displease Almighty God by indulging in practices which He has forbidden.

‘Well, might they not be some of Mr. C. S. Lewis’s Screwtape’s pupils—spirits or devils from hell?’

Now, who in his right mind wants to commune with spirits from hell, spirits who are the enemies of both God and man? Is it to such beings that the mourner must turn for sympathy, instead of to the God of all consolation?

These, we say, are the *general* principles.

The question now arises: How do we propose to deal with the *individual* cases in order to judge the extent of direct diabolic agency?

Here we must digress in order to emphasise once more the truth of true Christian teaching regarding the existence of the devil and his associate wicked spirits.

To support our belief in the existence of the devil we have the authority of the Old and New Testaments. In regard to that I may point out that many Spiritualists declare that the Bible was written ‘under spirit guidance.’ A former editor of *Light* (Mr. Wallis) and his wife wrote a book to prove it.

Now, the authenticity of the New Testament as an historical document is fully guaranteed. Even Harnack, the leader of the school of Higher Criticism in Germany, felt compelled to admit, in the end, the authenticity and genuineness of the various books of which it is composed. No historic document has been subjected to so prolonged, nor to such adverse criticism as has the New Testament. No other book has been so well vindicated.

Catholics, therefore, are on sound, reasonable ground when they accept the *facts* of Christ’s Birth, Death and Resurrection.

From the fact of the Resurrection of Christ they deduce His Divinity: He is Lord of Life, God Incarnate.

Accepting Jesus Christ as God Incarnate they believe in the

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absolute perfection of His character and in the absolute truth of His statements. *When Christ speaks it is God Who speaks.* Jesus is not only the Way and the Life—He is also the Truth.

Hence, when Jesus talks of the existence of the devil ('Be gone, Satan : for it is written : The Lord thy God shalt thou adore, and Him only shalt thou serve.' 'Heal the sick ; cast out devils') we believe that Satan and the devils exist. When He uttered those words to St. Peter : 'Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat . . .', we see in that warning the policy of attempting to bring about disunity amongst the Apostles and thus weaken their attack on the kingdom of darkness, just as Hitler to-day seeks to sow seeds of discord amongst the United Nations in order to weaken their attack on Germany.

When Jesus professes to exorcise possessing devils ('Go out of him, thou unclean spirit'), when He gives to His Apostles the power to cast out devils, a power distinct from that of healing the sick ('Heal the sick ; cast out devils'), then we believe unfeignedly in the existence of Satan and his wicked angels, and in their power to obsess and possess human beings.

That evil spirits, presumed to be discarnate spirits, do actually obsess or possess human beings is, as we have seen, admitted by the highest authorities in Spiritualism.

Materialistic psychologists may refer to all the examples of what may easily be cases of demonic possession—cases such as those of 'Felida X,' 'Sally Beauchamp,' and Léonies I and II—as cases of 'Split personality,' 'Doppel Ich,' 'Dédoublement de personnalité' ; or speak of them more mystifyingly as examples of 'Schizophrenia' ; but do these imposing terms explain the cases ? A psychologist who denies the existence of the human soul as a spiritual entity is forced to invent imposing words to save his face. 'Dédoublement de personnalité,' 'Doppel Ich'—these terms are mere words : *each human being is ONLY ONE PERSON.* In speaking of Jesus Christ as the God-Man Catholic theology understands and teaches that 'there are two *natures* in Jesus Christ, but only *one person*.' Hence, if there be another 'person' occupying the body of the possessed that 'person' is a devil.

I am not denying for a moment that there is a psychological explanation of the double *characteristics* observed in abnormal mental cases. After all we must stick to the principle of not postulating the supernatural until all possible natural explanations

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have been exhausted ; and a very natural explanation of *some* mental abnormalities may be found in the *subconscious* exercising the ascendancy over the *conscious*. Those who are addicted to a form of auto-hypnosis through attempts to develop mediumship are, no doubt, in reality, developing a mental condition wherein the subconscious is being allowed too large a portion of activity ; with the result that the *controllable* conscious mental life drops into the background, to be superseded by the subliminal (or subconscious)—and that condition is abnormal, unhealthy and dangerous, dangerous to mental balance. That danger is increased where the mental background stages a belief in the action of departed spirits ; and just as repeated subjection to hypnotic suggestion can bring about an undesirable state of mind, so repeated experiments in auto-hypnosis can lead to delusions regarding obsession and possession by the spirits of the dead.

Such obsessional cases are common amongst Spiritualists. Hence the precautions that must be taken, in the earlier stages of ‘development of mediumship’ at least, against allowing oneself to pass into a state of trance.

The shivering and shaking, the moaning and even frothing at the mouth that in many cases precede ‘going under control’ are of their nature—considered merely as nervous disturbances—something to cause anxiety. If the individuals who allow themselves to get to such a stage are of a neurotic disposition, there is danger to their mental balance at least. What is more, because *they invoke the control of spirits* their state may readily become one of not mere delusion, but of obsession : ‘Whistle, and I’ll come.’

We may be asked : How do Catholics attempt to diagnose satanic possession in such cases as distinguished from possession by discarnate human souls ?

The answer is : that *all* the phenomena of the alleged possession are taken into account, examined, considered and diagnosed. Just as in medical diagnosis various elements combine to enable the doctor to form his opinion as to the patient’s malady—temperature, pulse, respiration, location of pain, and so on—so in spiritual diagnosis various indications, some by themselves, others when conjoined with a multiplicity of factors, enable those competent to judge to decide whether the case is one of mere mental abnormality or real possession. Catholic theology has laid down the principles for determining diabolic possession, and some of those principles or criteria are such as are applicable to the judging

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of the nature of the agency at work in the production of Spiritualistic phenomena.

Amongst those criteria some are merely probable indications of possession; others are looked upon as certain—just as in medicine some symptoms of disease are only probable indications of a specific malady, whilst others are certain and definite. And, again as in medicine, a combination of probable symptoms of a disease may justify a doctor in making a definite diagnosis; so, too, in spiritual diagnosis a combination of several probable signs of possession may justify a decided opinion on the point.

[*En parenthèse* I might suggest to the serious reader a comparative study of Chapter IX in *Human Personality*, by F. W. Myers, and the exceptionally good book *Les Névroses et la Possession diabolique*, by Dr. Charles Hélot. There is a profound contrast between the views of one who does not want to admit the existence of the devil, and of one who exhausted all possible natural explanations only to find that a supernatural, satanic influence had to be admitted in the end.]

In the application of these criteria to psychical phenomena I quite realise that, devilish in character as they may be, some of the indications may be due to the downright malevolent thoughts communicated through telepathy from the sitter or sitters to the mind of the medium. For example, take the obscene and dreadfully blasphemous brochure, *Histoire de l'Eucharistie*, published by M. le Chevalier Le Clément de St. Marcq. (St. Marcq sent me twenty-five copies of it; it was issued in French, Flemish and Spanish.) St. Marcq was the President of the *Fédération Spirite Belge* (representing the 37 Spiritualist Societies). Beginning in October 1904 he gave a course of lectures on 'L'Interprétation des Livres Sacrés' to Spiritualist study-circles at Antwerp. The course covered two years' study, and was repeated in its entirety to five series of students, and was not interrupted till 1909, when a new course of theology (§) was begun.

This course, an exegetical one, comprised the most blasphemous and obscene teaching regarding the Holy Eucharist. He condensed it in his brochure. The book was so horrible that all but two of the societies in the Federation—those of Bruges and Antwerp—forced him to resign his leadership, and he was charged by the official organ of the *Fédération (Le Courrier Spirite Belge)* with 'immoralité flagrante' for publishing it.

Although St. Marcq claimed for his book that it was written under spirit-guidance it may have been due to nothing else but

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thought-transference from the vile mind of St. Marcq to the medium. But I do not think that a Catholic could be justly blamed for deciding that it was the work of the devil, especially since the principles he enunciated are very especially those of the ‘Black Mass,’ which is, in direct intention, the worship of Satan himself. When to this is added the fact that the book contained letters of approbation from a number of Satanists (including two *ex-abbés*) the probability of its being the work of the devil is increased.

I quote this case as an illustration of how far one may be prepared to go in assessing a merely natural explanation, one due, for example, to telepathy from an evil mind; but when a more complete knowledge of the symptomatic circumstances are studied in its connection something really diabolic is suggested.

Now, in regard to the mental (or psychic) phenomena it is not only the *character* of the alleged spirit-messages that needs to be considered, there are other signs that have to be valued. Some of them may be found in certain maladies—hysteria, lunacy, etc.—but the indications of their being diabolic in origin depend on their accumulation. These probable signs are too numerous to relate. Hence we shall confine our attention to the more *certain* signs.

Amongst those laid down as providing certain evidence of diabolic agency are the following:

1. Si quis prius ignarus de repente loquatur peregrinis—that is: *speaking* in a language of which the medium was previously ignorant.

We must note here: (a) it is not a matter of replying in one’s own language to questions put in a foreign tongue—thought is not dependent on any language; the deaf and dumb can *think* before ever they learn anything of manual signs—it is a matter of *using* a language never previously learnt. That is the great marvel in the miracle Christ wrought when he healed the man who was born deaf and dumb, ‘and *immediately* he spoke *right*, blessing God’;

(b) nor is it a matter of uttering a few phrases that could have been learnt by heart. There is the very amusing case, ‘The Return of Ardit,’ as described by Mr. Harry Price in his *Leaves from a Psychist’s Case-Book*, where the late H. Dennis Bradley’s most trusted medium was found to have memorised a few sentences from Italian phrase-books. This was not discovered till a good time afterwards (pp. 305, ss.);

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(c) nor is it a case of the medium muttering unintelligible sounds which the sitters, in their ignorance of the language those sounds are supposed to represent, accept on the medium's statement to be *ancient* Chinese, Arabic or *early* Hebrew. As an example we have the incident recorded in *Psychic News* (Jan. 6, 1934, p. 6) : 'Hebrew as Evidence : The third story is that of a women (*sic*) who went to Red Cloud's voice circle. A spirit voice claimed to be her husband.

' "Can you prove it?" she asked.

' Immediately, he spoke in Hebrew to her.

' This was evidential, as, on earth, he was a teacher of Hebrew in Scotland.'

It is very doubtful as to whether the widow knew Hebrew from Maltese. Nor are we told whether there was *anyone* present who could guarantee the sounds uttered to be genuine Hebrew, or to tell us whether it was Yiddish, Aramaic or some other Hebrew dialect.

And one's doubts as to the genuineness of the whole proceedings are increased by the statement that, 'in connection with the mediumship of Estelle Roberts' a 'man had a long conversation with Red Cloud, her guide, in *Arabic*.'

'Curioser and curioser,' said Alice.

It just happens that I kept the copy of *The Two Worlds* which its editor very kindly sent me, with paragraphs marked in which my name figured; because in that issue of February 6, 1931, there is a full-page article on the mediumship of Estelle Roberts. The article is 'An Interview with Mrs. Roberts.' It describes how her mediumship developed.

For a week nothing happened. In disgust she put away the table through which she had hoped to get communications, saying: 'That's that! They have given me nothing to prove what they said was true. I thought it was all "bunkum."'

'As I turned, my daughter screamed and ran out of the room. Then I felt a bump against my head, and, glancing around, I was astounded to see the table floating in the air across the room. I was not a bit frightened, and when it settled down again I put my hands on it. Then the message came: "I, Red Cloud, come help the world. I work with you. No more touch table. You have knowledge." (Red Cloud subsequently proved to be my guide.) To say I was astonished is to put it mildly.'

I, too, am astonished, to put it mildly. I know from experience that Arabic is one of the most difficult languages in the world. How comes it, then, that a Red Indian from North America can—

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according to *Psychic News*—carry on ‘a long conversation in Arabic,’ when his English is so ‘pidgin’? . . . And we have the Hebrew from the same source. Red Cloud also speaks in French at the Douai circle.

Well, *that* is *not* the kind of evidence we require to fulfil the condition ‘*si quis prius ignarus de repente linguis loquatur peregrinis.*’

Such instances as reported by the Spiritualist press are too reminiscent of ‘The Murder in the rue Morgue.’ Lovers of Poe will recall how the sounds made by the chatterings of a monkey were alleged, by the various witnesses in the case, to be languages quite dissimilar, but somehow representing to the minds of the witnesses a tongue foreign to their knowledge.

If, as in the case of the Zulu girl Germana—as given us by the Right Rev. Mgr. Delalle, of Natal—a case is substantiated of actual intelligent use of a language previously unknown to the subject, then the obvious explanation is that the phenomenon is supernatural (not merely supernormal); and when the rest of the details are filled in, with their satanic character, only one conclusion remains—viz. diabolic agency.

2. *Si legat ignarus, scribat . . . de rebus sublimionibus, et aliunde ignotis, erutide respondeat*—that is: the exhibition of a knowledge of, and an ability to argue about, subjects beyond the intellectual capacity of the medium.

A perfect example of these two criteria is provided in the narrative above referred to regarding the case of possession affecting two Zulu girls, Germana and Monica. It corresponded in nearly every detail with the case of Maria Celeste (as reported in *Luce e Ombra*) and that of ‘Louise’ given by Dr. Charles Hélot in his *Névroses et Possession diabolique*. I published a comparative study of these three cases—one given by a Catholic bishop in Natal; one by an Italian student of the occult; and the third by a French mental specialist—in a medical monthly, where it received complete approbation.

Mental phenomena, whether diagnosed by materialist psychologists as examples of split personality, Doppel Ich, or *Dédoublement de Personnalité*, are not the only ones which come under consideration in the question of diagnosing diabolic possession. *Physical* phenomena are dealt with also.

The first criterion with regard to these is: ‘*Vires supra aetatis seu conditionis naturam ostendere*’—that is, the exhibition of praeternatural strength.

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As Dr. Charles Hélot points out, it is not a question of *mere increase* of strength (exaltation des forces) like that met with in convulsions or nervous attacks; but the exhibition of strength or of resistance must really be beyond human capability. 'Pour que ce signe puisse apporter une certitude, il faut que les tours de force ou de résistance dépassent véritablement les forces de la nature humaine.'

In the same class may be included such phenomena as are opposed to the laws of physics, chemistry and physiology: immunity from burning either by fire or chemicals; and so on—all trickerly apart, of course.

There is another criterion for application to mental phenomena which, taken strictly in its application, is also looked upon as a *certain* sign of diabolic influence: 'Si occulta et absentia, quae naturaliter ab homine sciri non possunt captum tamen daemonis non excedunt, nec sanctitati eiusmodi hominis tribui possunt manifestet'; but with our present knowledge of the extent of the power of telepathy the use of this criterion would need to be very strict; the words 'quae naturaliter ab homine sciri non possunt' would need stringent application.

However, the criteria already given are sufficient to cover all classes of Spiritualistic phenomena.

Those criteria are sound; and I think that all unprejudiced readers will admit that they are. To use such terms as 'telekinesis' to cover such physical manifestations as levitations, tying knots in handkerchiefs, ringing bells and throwing men's jackets in the faces of the sitters at a séance explains nothing. To speak of 'telekinetic phenomena' is merely a descriptive phrase; it is not an explanation of the *source* from which the power proceeds.

So, too, to speak of 'automatic writing' is not an explanation as to the source whence the written words come.

Nor does the term 'clairvoyance' mean anything definite. Clairvoyance leaves itself open to fraud more than any other Spiritualist phenomenon known—if, as Mr. Harry Price admits, the trance condition is impossible of verification, what test have we for proving the genuineness of any professional clairvoyant? As a matter of fact an ex-medium told me she threw Spiritualism overboard because she discovered how easy it was for a medium, when only partially 'under control,' to get on a platform and deliver an address that was from her own *conscious* mind, but which the audience would take to be a *spirit* message.

Hence I would conclude—both in the sense of finishing this

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chapter, and in the sense of summing up in judgment—that any *genuine*, supernormal phenomena that have an evil influence behind them, either in the source of power which they manifest or in their effect on Christian belief are of the devil. For the Christian, at least, the mental specialist of the Freudian or Dr. Alexander Cannon type is suspect; the physicist of the materialist school is suspect; the Spiritualist is wholly suspect.

Give the devil his due—even if it be only that of the admission of his existence. Jesus Christ taught the truth of his existence—that should be good enough for us.

VI
THE CATHOLIC POINT OF VIEW

I

‘ So Spiritualism is evil ? ’

Most certainly.

‘ It is even of the devil ? ’

Well, if the statement made by the Rev. Stainton Moses be true, namely, that ‘ there is an organised plan on the part of the spirits who govern these manifestations to act on us *and on the religious thought of the age*,’ I cannot see how one can escape the conclusion that the devil is behind it all. Have we not seen already how even clergymen of the Church of England and ministers of the various Nonconformist sects have openly acknowledged that Spiritualism led them to abandon their belief in the Divinity of Jesus Christ, to reject the Bible and to deny the value of Christ’s Atonement and Redemption by His death on Calvary ? Must not that in itself indicate the diabolic influence behind the Spiritualist movement ?

And the high priest said to Him : I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us if thou be the Christ the Son of God.

Jesus saith to him : Thou hast said it.

So wrote Saint Matthew in his account of Christ’s trial before Annas and Caiaphas.

Again the high priest asked him, and said : Art thou the Christ the Son of the blessed God ?

And Jesus said to Him : I AM.

Just weigh those words : ‘ I adjure thee by the living God ’—that is, ‘ on your oath ’—tell us if thou be the Christ the Son of the blessed God.

Now if the challenge meant merely that Jesus claimed to be a son of our Father in heaven as *all* Jews claimed to be, why should there be need to put Him on oath before He answered the question ?

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If the question meant merely 'Dost thou claim to be, *like us*, a child of our heavenly Father?' why the sequel: '*the high priest rent his garments, saying: He hath blasphemed, what further need have we of witnesses? Behold now you have heard the blasphemy: What think you? But they answering said: He is guilty of death?*'

The claim to be a mere creature, a created son of God, was no blasphemy to any Jew; it did not entail the penalty of death. So CHRIST MUST HAVE MEANT SOMETHING MORE than mere created sonship or adopted sonship. He must have meant what He said when He declared 'Before Abraham was made, I AM.' It was because He claimed to be DIVINE that He was sentenced to death for blasphemy.

To support that claim was the whole purpose of the Gospel of St. John. You can't get away from it. The very first words of the first chapter of that Gospel emphasise the fact: '*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*' And almost the last words of that gospel are: '*These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the CHRIST the SON OF GOD.*'

In the light of these statements of the Gospels I challenge any Spiritualist who still claims to be a Christian to read the first Epistle of St. John. It would almost seem as if St. John had had a prophetic view of modern Spiritualism when he wrote. He was addressing people who *had* believed in spiritualistic practices. He asserts the existence of the devil. He refers his converts to their former belief in the messages from spirits; and he declares regarding those spirits—who were like those of whom we read in the Acts of the Apostles—that '*Every spirit that dissolveth Jesus is NOT OF GOD, and this is Antichrist.*'

When he says 'try the spirits,' he does not mean, as some Spiritualists maintain, that we should 'hold séances'; he means 'test their messages; analyse their teaching' (*cf. Lyceum Manual*), and if you find that such messages 'dissolve' Jesus Christ by denying either His humanity or His divinity then they are NOT OF GOD, but of Antichrist.

'Yes; but . . .'

Yes; but what?

'Well, even members of the Society for Psychical Research and other enquirers into the phenomena of Spiritualism never mention the devil . . . people like Professors Barrett and Hyslop and Sidgwick and Richet and Bolzano; and men like Schrenck-Notzing and Bradley and Mr. Harry Price.'

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That's the trouble. All these people you have named profess to carry out their tests and experiments on scientific lines ; AND THEY ARE NOT TRULY SCIENTIFIC as long as they ignore a possible explanation of the phenomena that has held the field since Christianity began. Their conclusions depend entirely on two very important and capital considerations : first, on their personal views as to the nature of the human soul—their views may be Christian or Theosophical or Freudian or entirely Materialistic ; and secondly, on their *religious convictions*—do they admit the existence of a spirit-world in the historic and traditional Christian sense or not ? That is, do they believe in the existence of an order of spiritual beings, some good, some evil, who are not discarnate human souls, but are, as Catholic theology defines them, purely spiritual creatures, either good or bad—that is, either good Angels or devils ?

By 'pure' spirits is meant : intellectual beings whose nature is complete without any dependence on matter, and who have complete personality.

If these learned gentlemen deny the spirituality of the human soul, or if they refuse to accept the possibility of the existence of non-human spiritual beings, then logically they will not admit the existence of the devil and his associate angels. But as long as they ignore or refuse to consider those lesser factors their explanations are not complete, they are not scientific—they have not exhausted ALL POSSIBLE EXPLANATIONS.

'Well, what is the Catholic explanation of Spiritualist phenomena ?'

To begin with, let me tell you that the Catholic Church is more truly scientific in her judgment than are the scientists of to-day. She *does* attempt to explore all possible explanations. She lays down the principle that we are 'not to postulate the supernatural until all possible natural explanations have been exhausted.' Hence the establishment of the *Bureau des Contestations* at Lourdes—an office to which any doctor of any faith, or of none, has a right of entry ; and where the medical history of any patient cured at Lourdes can be examined fully, and where any doctor is free to examine the patient for himself, at the time of the cure and at the next visit twelve months afterwards. No 'cure' is admitted by the *Bureau* unless the patient presents a full medical certificate issued by the doctor who has had charge of the patient at home.

'If the 'Healing by Swiftfoot' or 'Black Hawk' or by the 'Golden Triangle Healing and Teaching Centre' adopted one-

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half of the stringent rules of the Lourdes *Bureau* then we might think there was more than mere healing by auto-suggestion in the results they obtained.

Even admitting, for argument's sake, the reality and permanence of such Spiritualistic 'healings' they afford no evidence whatsoever that any discarnate human soul is the healing agent.

And coming to the consideration of the *physical* phenomena of Spiritualism we ask, from the practical point of view: how can such phenomena as levitation, apports, the movement of trumpets, the tying of knots in handkerchiefs, and so on, prove that the human soul survives after the death of the body?

Even if such phenomena were not due to trickery the most they can prove is the existence of *an unknown force*—either physical or spiritual—that appears to be beyond the discoveries of physical science. They provide no element for establishing the identity of any alleged manifesting 'spirit.'

After reading and studying Spiritualistic publications, from various countries, for over thirty years, I do not recall the claim ever having been made that because a table was raised in the dark, almost to the ceiling, that it was a proof that a muscular Uncle Joe or a hefty Aunt Maggie, or any other identifiable person was present in spirit form.

For example, let me quote from a letter to *Psychic News*. The correspondent wrote:

'For purposes of instruction, four of us used to sit at the ouija board one night every week. Six weeks ago we were asked to sit in the dark in future. . . . At the second sitting we were treated to peculiar flashes of light. . . .

'The same evening, spirit friends moved the trumpet slightly without contact while we held hands. . . .

'The fifth sitting was absolutely devoid of results; but quite undaunted, we obtained another trumpet, and held our sixth sitting.

'Results were beyond our wildest dreams. The trumpet performed a peculiar kind of tap dance on the table. When I lifted the trumpet off the table to make room for the ouija board, a bluish-white light jumped between me and the trumpet, the end of which was about three inches away from me at the time' (*Psychic News*, Jan. 6, 1934).

On analysis, what does this correspondent's letter prove?

Apart from the suspicion aroused by:

1. the instructions received to sit *in the dark* in future,

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2. the acquisition of a *new trumpet*, to use instead of the 'home-made' one in use previously,

3. the *retirement to the kitchenette* for the sittings (where there was probably an electric cooker or an electric meter),

what evidence do the phenomena (†) of the trumpet doing a peculiar tap dance on the table, or the bluish-white light (so electrical in character) provide that an identified or identifiable discarnate soul was the agent for the puerilities that took place?

Surely the answer is: 'None.'

Moreover, the claim was not made in the letter that any identifiable spirit was the agent. We are simply told that 'spirit friends moved the trumpet slightly.' That is the sole reference to any agency.

When bottles of scent or a bunch of flowers (apports) are introduced into a closed room—like the faked apports of Madame Blavatsky—how does that prove they were brought by a dead relation or friend? One of Conan Doyle's photographed fairies might have brought them. And when the spirits of the dead bring presents of ear-rings 'from the spirit world' that were *made in Birmingham*, we are justified in wondering if Spiritualist 'apports' are less fraudulent than those of Mme Blavatsky.

(Cf. *Hatcher and Little v. Crown*; Cardiff, Nov. 12, 1942.)

The retort might be made: 'But what of materialisations? There you have proof of identity.'

Well, what about materialisations? Personally I think they, with public clairvoyance, constitute the biggest fraud in the whole range of Spiritualist phenomena.

Perhaps the most famous materialisations were those obtained through the mediumship of Eva C., under the auspices and arrangements of the Freiherr Dr. Schrenck-Notzing and Mme Bisson. I have read Schrenck-Notzing's book and studied the photos it contained. I have read critiques of the book in English, French, German and Italian psychic magazines; and I am convinced it was all fraud—better done than the efforts of Mrs. Helen Duncan, who has been twice convicted in the court for fraudulent mediumship.

There is no getting away from the fact that Eva C. made use of full front-page blocks from a French illustrated newspaper (*Le Miroir*) for her 'spirit faces.' The flatness of the faces; the creases in some of them; and the appearance of *some of the actual lettering* of the name of the newspaper from which the blocks were taken proved the fraud.

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The President Wilson 'materialisation' could deceive no one. It shows the touched-up newspaper photo just like a page from a newspaper *merely lying on the medium's chest*, with one edge of it extending beyond Eva's body. It is taken from *Le Miroir of Nov. 17, 1912*.

Similar one-surfaced faces were materialised at Ada Besinnet's séance in the presence of Sir Arthur and Lady Doyle. Despite the enthusiasm of these two protagonists of Spiritualism for the performance given on that occasion, I would rank it as one of the most worthless séances ever given. The sitting was held in absolute darkness, and there was no control of the medium nor of her assistant at the victrola.

If a person stands in the centre of a circle of eleven people, *all*, surely, can see him at the same time; but if the individual in the centre of the circle is showing a photo only three or four of the group can see the full surface of the photo at the same time. Of the rest of the group one or two at either side will observe only the edge of the picture; the others will see nothing of it because it will be hidden from their view by the interposing body of the person in the centre who holds it.

And that is what happened at Miss Ada Besinnet's séance. Here is what Mr. W. W. Roche says of it—he was present on the occasion: 'All the appearances were visible *fully* to only three or at most four sitters at a time. . . . But the materializations appeared several times *at different arcs* of the circle, so that all had a view.

'Now came a vision for Lee Keedick and the sitters on either side of him. He gave a little gasp, but said nothing. The same vision showed to the other sitters.

'Lady Doyle cried: "Why, it is Katie King." The vision was an *exact reproduction*, each sitter testified, *of the photo* of Katie King taken by Sir William Crooks years ago and now being reproduced by Sir Arthur in his American lectures.

'Lady Doyle said: "It is the same sweet face, the same dress, the same draping—it is Katie King. . . ."

"It is a marvelous thing," said Sir Arthur, and Lady Doyle added: "Is it not wonderful how they try to aid us? Sir Arthur can now tell of having himself seen Katie King, whose spirit picture he has been showing. . . ."

'There were several other vivid materialisations, visible from two to five seconds; one of a boy, one of a man, one of an elderly woman and several of younger women. Some of them were

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recognised; others were not' (*Toledo News-Bee*, May 22, 1922).

Just fancy travelling 60,000,000 miles to appear from two to five seconds, and then not to be recognised! 'Even if ghosts have souls, they certainly have no brains.'

Possibly some people are harder to convince than others. I, personally, find it difficult to see how Sir Arthur found it 'marvellous.' (The American spelling has been retained from Mr. Roche's report—hence, too, 'Sir William Crooks'.)

The reader must bear in mind that the séance was held 'in perfect darkness.' Now if a human form—not the photo of a human figure—were really materialised it ought to have more than one dimension, and so should be visible to all present at the same time, and not to only three or four sitters at a time.

'Ordinarily,' Mr. Roche tells us, 'the materializations are illuminated from one side only.' Is not that the very effect one would expect from throwing a light, either from a small torch or from a phosphorous lamp, on to a photo?

Mrs. Helen Duncan's materialisations had fairly rounded features; but they were Father Christmas masks and 'Poll-faces.' Too often, as in the case of Mrs. Thompson and Mr. Harold Evans, the mediums themselves masquerade as the manifesting spirits. In this connection it is amusing and interesting to read in *Il Veltro* (p. 1212, No. 14, 1909) that during a séance in Dresden a spirit-form was fired at—and the *medium* was wounded! 'A Dresda, in una seduta spiritica, sarebbe stata colpita, con arma da fuoco, la forma d'un fantasma, vero o falso che fosse; e il medio sarebbe stato costretto a porsi a letto ferito.'

If Mr. Harry Price had added to his already numerous precautions against fraud the warning that, when camera-shots were taken an automatic pistol would go off, he might have been able to add a few more names to those enumerated in his chapter 'Mediums who will not sit with me.'

Stanton Moses had little time for such phenomena, where a medium 'produces one's grandmother for five shillings,' as he put it. It is to be doubted if he would believe any stronger if the materialisations were produced at Mrs. Duncan's charge of 12s. 6d. plus unpaid income-tax. He wrote: 'I believe the whole method of conducting materialisation séances to be erroneous, calculated to introduce elements of uncertainty, and to produce the results which we are compelled again and again to

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deplorable.' He adds, a little further on, that what he terms the fact of materialisation being 'presented as it only too frequently is, amid conditions of darkness and secrecy that seem devised for the very purpose of mystification, can convince no one who is worth convincing' (*Higher Aspects*, pp. 16-17).

In his book *Spirit Mediums Exposed*, Mr. Samri Frikell wrote : 'All the materializing séances are fakes and swindles. No less an investigator than the celebrated Doctor E. J. Dingwall of the British Society for Psychical Research admitted almost as much to me. During his visit to this country in 1923 he said that 99 per cent. of the physical phenomena he had witnessed had been fraudulent.'

Professor Hyslop, the pioneer of psychical research in America, had even less time for *physical* phenomena. He presented a sane view when he wrote regarding them : 'I shall give very brief attention to these, as I do not believe in a single one of them' (*Enigmas of Psychical Research*, p. 337).

When men of the standing of Stainton Moses and Hyslop, who genuinely and firmly believed in the actuality of spirit-communication, speak out so strongly in denunciation of physical phenomena Catholics may, surely, be reasonably excused if they also refuse to believe in their genuineness.

As for the psychical, or mental, phenomena, we have seen enough in Chapter IV—*Per ardua ab astris*—to convince us of the worthlessness of clairvoyance and clairsaidence in providing any proof whatsoever that the messages come from any discarnate human being.

In addition to this we Catholics are entitled to ask, using the expression of the Rev. W. Stainton Moses, why should there be connected with séances so many 'conditions of darkness and secrecy that seem to be devised for the very purpose of mystification'?

Mystification is the right word. The actual precautions taken at séances are just of the very type that lend themselves to aid mystification and shield fraud.

The perfect darkness or obscurity leaves lots of room for fraud, too much room. The Ada Besinnet séance that Conan Doyle described as 'marvellous,' and at which Lady Doyle declared with reference to the tambourine effects in perfect darkness : 'I have never before heard such tambourine playing,' is a perfect example of how people may be deceived. Anyone who has even a slight knowledge of stage 'Black Magic' knows how conveniently

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easy it is to create illusions of a most striking kind on a darkened stage.

Stainton Moses and D. D. Home condemned entirely the darkened room. Both of those two mediums produced their phenomena in full light. During six years Stainton Moses experienced manifestations 'at all times, and in all sorts of places, in the house and out of it, with no formal séance; at meals, in church, in empty rooms, here, there, and everywhere' (*Spirit Identity*, p. 95). If they could do it, why can't all mediums do the same?

The editor of *The Two Worlds* (Feb. 6, 1931) criticised 'the Vestments, the Postures, the swinging of the Censer, and various other artistic but useless forms of genuflection at a Roman Catholic service.' I did not know that 'Vestments' or 'the swinging of the Censer' were 'forms of genuflection'; perhaps Mr. Oaten knows better. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, who *ought* to have known better, sneered at Catholic liturgical rites. But I wonder what would these good Spiritualists have to say if Catholic priests offered the holy sacrifice of the Mass in the dark, to the accompaniment of 'flitting lights' 'some high in the air, some below the level of the table' (altar), 'some mere sparks of light; others gaseous appearances as large as half a dollar'? (*Toledo News-Bee*, May 22, 1922).

Yet that is the kind of thing Conan Doyle considered marvellous and to be approached in a religious spirit. The late, much missed G. K. Chesterton took Sir Arthur to task fairly severely on this point. This is what he wrote: 'He has some very innocent remarks about what he considers grotesque in the sacramental system; innocent, because apparently unconscious of what everybody else in the world considers grotesque in the spiritualistic system. If any Christian service were so conducted as to resemble a really successful séance, the world might well be excused for falling back on the word "grotesque." . . . But when Sir Arthur deliberately gibes at our ceremonies, we may be at least allowed to smile at his. Suppose any Catholic rite before the altar consisted of binding a human being hand and foot with ropes; should we ever hear the last of the horrible survival of human sacrifice? Suppose we declared that the priest went into a trance and that clouds of thick white stuff like cotton-wool came out of his mouth, as a manifestation of celestial grace; might not some of our critics be heard to murmur the word "grotesque"? If we conducted a quiet little evening service

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in which a big brass trumpet careered about in the air and patted people on the head, caressed a lady with intimate gestures of affection, and generally exhibited itself as about as attractive an object as a philandering trombone or an amorous big drum, would not our critics have something to say about the unwholesome hysteria and senseless excitement of Popery? If the Spiritualist goes out of his way to challenge us to a duel in the matter of dignity, I do not really think it can be reasonably said that he is on stronger ground than we' (*The Thing*, pp. 180-181).

If we are to consider the grotesque, what are we to think of such advertisements as these :

' Psychic Call Bell, everything necessary, including prisms. 9/6.'

' Receptograph Communicator. Defies the subconscious mind. 4/6.' [It ought to be worth £20 4s. 6d. if it can defy the subconscious mind.]

' P.S. Trumpets are the best ! . . . Made of specially treated celluloid (the most tangible substance to spirit forces). Function with minimum of power. . . . Highly absorbent psychically. Phenomena possible immediately. . . . Why exhaust patience and power on old-fashioned aluminium trumpets? . . . 5/6 ; luminous 7/6.'

Does one find anything so grotesque, as an aid to religion, in Catholic publications? What would Spiritualists say if we had advertisements such as : ' Sanctus bells complete with prisms ' ? or, following the example of a North London Spiritualist Society : ' Eat more bananas as an aid to prayer ' ?

We have music in our churches, granted ; but the music is in harmony and meaning with the act of worship it accompanies—and so we are entitled to ask how the playing of ' Where the Four-leaved Clover grows ' or ' The Big Bad Wolf ' can be an aid to the worship of Almighty God. Surely the playing of ' The Big Bad Wolf ' following on Lady Caillard's prayer is somewhat worse than grotesque ; so, too, the prayers of the Baylises, the Hamiltons, George Valiantine and Mrs. Murphey-Lydy. Why the hymns followed by songs ? Why the Lord's Prayer followed by *Il Bacio*, or, as in Mrs. Helen Duncan's séances, by ' You are my Sunshine ' ?

' Can the Lord's Prayer be called a conjuration ? ' asked Mr. Loseby, the defending Counsel in the Duncan case. All know the answer to that ; but the use of the Lord's Prayer as a sort of cover for fraudulent mediumship passes beyond the grotesque to

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what the late Dennis Bradley described as 'nauseous blasphemy.' G. K. Chesterton told Father O'Connor that the use of the planchette left him with what he 'could best describe as a bad smell in the mind.' To read of the misuse of prayers and hymns at fraudulent séances has a like effect.

Is it not grotesque to have music and singing and banging and shouts of 'Bravo!' almost constantly during a séance? As Professor Joad says (with his tongue in his cheek, no doubt): 'The spirit control is said to like a noise.' I can understand the *medium* liking it—noises can so easily cover the faint sounds of accomplices moving about.

To add to the grotesqueness—if the movement is to be accepted as a religion—there are the suspicion that attaches itself to all the conditions laid down for the séances, and the conflicting excuses given for the mistakes made.

The impersonation of alleged spirit-guides whom not one Spiritualist can identify—Phinuit, Pheneas, Imperator, Fedra, Ivy, Red Cloud, Abduhl Latif, Silver Birch, etc., etc., etc.—all this is grotesque and suspicious.

It is grotesque because the 'authority' of these unidentifiable guides or controls is placed above that of Jesus Christ.

It is suspicious because it affords the medium a cover for the mistakes made: the English language is so difficult; or the controlling spirit lived so long ago; or he is on so advanced a sphere. And since no one to-day ever heard the prophet Malachy or an ancient Red Indian speak, any medium can adopt any form of halting English to represent the efforts of these strange folk to express themselves. Sergeant Ellis's 'Pierre' uses broken English. 'Hawk Chief, speaking in a loud voice and giving a war whoop.' 'Chloe' says, 'You have a big white massa'—Dennis Bradley mentioned in italics: '*Chloe is an Indian girl, and occasionally uses the vocabulary of her tribe. Men she always refers to as "Massas."*'

I would like to ask: what did Dennis Bradley know of the vocabulary of Chloe's tribe? and since when did Red Indians adopt the vocabulary of West African negroes? It's all too easy! Jimmie Sparrow says 'Bli'me,' and at once he is identified; a Red Indian says 'Massa,' and at once the identification is complete!

'You always know Joan,' says Mr Barbanell, 'as apart from her squeaky voice, she always says "Good night," instead of "Good evening."'

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And *that* is called identification! If a voice shouted out 'Hallelujah!' would that be a proof that the founder of the Salvation Army was present?

The opportunities for mimicry are too obvious; especially when the alleged manifesting spirits are claimed to be foreigners of some kind, or persons who died so long ago that no one living ever heard them speak; yet the 'big noises' in Spiritualism nearly all seem to fall for this grotesque weakness: Dennis Bradley had his 'Hookum'; Conan Doyle had 'Pheneas'; Stainton Moses had 'Imperator'; Mr. Hannen Swaffer has his 'White Shadow,' his 'Silver Birch,' and an ancient Egyptian. Mrs. Victoria Helen Duncan chose two characters as her spirit-guides whom none of her clients had ever heard speak: 'Peggy,' who seems to claim no surname; and 'Albert,' who used to live in the Antipodes.

Mr. Hannen Swaffer might change his Red Indian 'guides,' but Mrs. Duncan has stuck to Peggy and Albert for about fifteen years; yet in spite of this faithful attachment they both let her down.¹ Mr. C. E. Loseby, her defending Counsel, said at the Old Bailey: 'If Mrs. Duncan has a guide he will be with her now, probably trying to help her here, possibly waiting for an opportunity to help her. If it be true, you may be sure of it here, in the Central Criminal Court' (Portsmouth *Evening News*, March 27, 1944). An unfortunate statement on Mr. Loseby's part, and a most unfortunately lost opportunity for 'Albert'!

After all we have been told by Lady Doyle of the ability of the 'spirits' to foretell disastrous events it does seem a pity that no spirit gave warning to Mrs. Duncan as to what would happen at Portsmouth. How grotesque, to use Sir Arthur's term!

As for the 'ectoplasm' or 'teleplasm,' Mr. Harry Price has given his analysis of that: regurgitated butter-muslin or cheese-cloth or toilet-paper. Regarding the last commodity, is it a mere coincidence that the name of Mrs. Duncan's ectoplasmic parrot boasted the trade-name of a toilet-paper: 'Bronco'?

We are told repeatedly by Spiritualists that this so-called ectoplasm is vitally connected with the medium. In the report of Mrs. Duncan's latest trial, we read that Lt. Worth, arranging with Mrs. (†) Homer, 'asked if he could bring a surgeon naval officer who was sceptical, and Mrs. Homer replied, "Yes, I will

¹ It is somewhat strange that, whereas the Rev. Vale Owen's baby daughter grew up in the Summer Land, Mrs. Duncan's "Peggy" is still but a child, wearing the same OS size in ladies' vests.

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give him a seat in the front row and scare him stiff." She said that if the doctor attempted to touch the ectoplasm it would rush back with such force into Mrs. Duncan's body that it might cause her serious harm or even kill her' (Portsmouth *Evening News*, March 23, 1944).

If ectoplasm is so *very vital* to the medium it must form part of her organism. Now Mrs. Victoria Helen Duncan's ectoplasm could produce rabbits and parrots and cats. That a human being, mediumistic or otherwise, should be able to produce birds, quadrupeds and human beings indiscriminately, and at will, is beyond my powers of credence. It would be interesting, *en passant*, to know what was the judgment of Sir Oliver Lodge after he had been present at Mrs. Duncan's exhibition of mediumship. Perhaps the fauna were not included in the séance programme in his day; in which omission he would have to take second place to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, who once felt a dog's muzzle on his knee at a séance.

With regard to the vital connection between the ectoplasm and the medium, Dr. Carlo Anzona wrote in a series of articles in *Luce e Ombra* on the alleged materialisations produced through the mediumship of Eva C.: 'Esiste tra i medium e le materializzazioni un rapporto così intimo, da causa a effetti, da autorizzarci ad accogliere l'ipotesi di un processo teleplastico che si svolge unicamente per mezzo dell'attività psichica dei soggetti? Io credo che per ora questo rapporto non sia dimostrato, nè dal punto di vista fisico, nè da quello psicologico.'

Since Dr. Anzona passed that judgment no one has proved that there is a vital nexus, physical or psychological, between the alleged ectoplasm and the medium.

It is surely also grotesque that a medium who had been so thoroughly debunked by Mr. Harry Price and later convicted of fraudulent mediumship in a Scottish court should be granted a diploma by the Spiritualists' National Union after both exposures. It amounted to a double diploma, since the Spiritualists' National Union felt themselves constrained to discuss the question of the Edinburgh conviction at an Annual General Meeting. A vote was taken, and by a huge majority the diploma was renewed!

Since then the good lady has carried on her deceptions and frauds apparently under the aegis of the Spiritualists' National Union. Eleven years of continued financial profit at the expense of sorrowing souls. Spiritualists, protesting against police con-

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victions, have declared that in their persecution they were like the early Christians ; but I do not know of any early Christian who was persecuted shouting out : ' Oh, I have done nothing. I have never done anything. Oh, God ; is there a God ? ' Rather, ' And calling in the apostles, *after they had scourged them*, they charged them that they should not speak at all in the name of Jesus, and they dismissed them. And they indeed went out from the council *rejoicing* that they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus' (Acts of the Apostles, v, 40, 41).

It is grotesque to read of Mrs. Helen Duncan dealing her husband ' a smashing blow on the face which sent him reeling ' because he suggested she should allow an X-ray photo to be taken on the occasion of her first exposure ; and engaging in ' a terrific struggle ' with Miss Maule, which led to her prosecution at Edinburgh in 1933. The Chief Constable of Portsmouth declared that when that struggle took place ' Mrs. Duncan used blasphemous language, swung a chair and hit two people in the audience. She said to the woman who had caught hold of the stockinet material : ' I will brain you ' (Portsmouth *Evening News*, April 1, 1944). So like an early Christian !

If this is the best a twice-diplomaed medium can give us—well, we don't need Arthur Askey to tell us that ' It makes you think.' At the very least it makes one wonder what trust can be put in *non*-diplomaed mediums when the Spiritualists' National Union can pass a vote of confidence in a medium who had twice been convicted of fraud.

The cause of Mrs. Helen Duncan, who could earn over £100 a week by her performances, would mean, in case of conviction in a higher court, such a loss of prestige to the Spiritualists' National Union that a meeting was held in London on April 22, 1944, to consider a further appeal. At a rather late hour in the day, Mr. J. B. McIndoe informed the audience at that meeting that : ' Mediums have now been instructed how to conduct themselves so as to avoid threats of prosecution ' (*Sunday Dispatch*, April 23, 1944). Now, did anyone ever hear, in modern times, of followers of any *religion*, barring the pseudo-gnostic type, being warned as to how to conduct themselves to avoid threats of prosecution ? The appeal for subscriptions to meet a possible ' cost of £2,500 ' (if not more) seems to indicate that Mrs. Helen Duncan, despite her three exposures of fraudulent mediumship, continues to hold the support of Spiritualists.

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I would invite all who still believe in her genuineness to study the photographs of her 'materialisations' as published in Mr. Harry Price's books *Leaves from a Psychist's Case-Book* and *Regurgitation and the Duncan Mediumship*. The coat-hanger shoulders of the spirits; the Father Christmas masks; the ladies O.S. vests; the cut-out photographs and the gorgonzola cheese-cloth—'smelling like death,' as a witness for the defence described it at the Old Bailey—are these really worth an appeal to the House of Lords?

It is certainly grotesque to find a warning issued 'to all mediums' about the importance of telling the truth, and yet to find so much 'fortune-telling' encouraged in their newspapers. I have been taken to task, in a friendly way, by Mr. Ernest W. Oaten, in *The Two Worlds*, for writing on this subject; but I still would emphasise it.

Lady Conan Doyle may protest—in leaded type—as she has done, that 'Spiritualists do not countenance fortune-telling.' She may add: 'We all loathe it and do all in our power to stop it'; but as long as Spiritualist periodicals continue to publish the advertisements of fortune-tellers, her protesting will convince no one. When palmists do as so many mediums do, Lady Doyle tells us it is 'most wrong.' Where is the difference? The Hamiltons, the Duncans, the Valiantines, the Murphey-Lydys can get away with it; but 'Madame Pola,' 'Signor Gaga' and 'Archie Demos' are 'most wrong.' Why?

In my article referred to above, which was accorded honourable mention in *The Two Worlds*, I gave a summary merely of a long list I have of mediums who profess to tell the future by crystals, candles, water, flowers, sand, the Tarot cards (of various types), and so on. I quoted from an article, *Chez les Pythonesses de Paris*, that the number of such fortune-tellers in Paris was 37,000. Mr. Oaten wanted to know 'who counted them.' He ought to put that question to the Spiritualist paper that published the article (*Echo du Merveilleux*); or to the 'Sûreté de Paris' who keep a registration check; and registration in France was, long before this war, a very thorough thing. Passports and identity cards were not a war-time regulation; the very detailed identity-card (*Carte d'Identité*) was in use in times of peace.

To the Catholic, with his keener sense of proportion as to the difference between the dignity and nature of the human soul and that of the brutes, it is certainly grotesque to read in Spiritualist publications that brute animals survive and pass on to the Summer

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Land ; that ' pet animals and birds are most numerous ' there. We may ask : if pet dogs, why not favourite parrots, cherished cats, beloved budgerigars ? And why draw the line there ? The Arab might want his trusty steed ; the Chinese fisherman his most accomplished cormorant ; the Indian and the African the elect of their elephants ; the stage-entertainer his well-trained seals, and the side-show man his performing fleas.

It is indeed grotesque to have the spiritual Heaven of the Christian sneered at as ' material,' and then to be offered a heaven where everything is as material as anything on earth—food and drink and houses and sport and financial interests and love, courtship, marriage and births. Nor must we omit the chance encounters with hapless souls wandering about in the Summer Land, miserable and unhappy because the coffee was bad.

And when we find Mr. Harry Price's ' Conan Doyle ' *control* denounced as a humbug by ' Conan Doyle ' manifesting in New York ; and Mr. Hannen Swaffer's ' Silver Birch ' declaring all other ' Silver Birchs ' as fraudulent, it is amusingly grotesque.

It is surely grotesque that the practice of any religion should be fraught with dangers and attended by ' disastrous results.' And *there are* those dangers attached to the practices of Spiritualism—dangers to mental balance, to moral judgment, to Christian faith, and dangers of obsession and possible actual possession.

Dr. J. M. Peebles, in reply to a question I put to him, wrote : '*Emphatically* I do think the indiscriminate use of planchette dangerous—dangerous as medicines misused ; dangerous as floods that drown—or fires that burn cities. . . . Be sure, misunderstood and misdirected mediumship may cause in-harmony, ill-health, and doubtless does lead to obsessions.'

Like all Spiritualists who admit the dangers, he goes on to add that under the ' right conditions ' the danger is obviated.

But that is not true.

No matter what attempt is made to secure a circle under what are generally considered the right conditions, viz. that the circle be composed only of people of good moral character, who are actuated by the highest motives and convinced of the truth of Spiritualism, *there is always danger*. Hence the warnings issued by Stainton Moses, Dr. Peebles, Sir Oliver Lodge, Dennis Bradley and the rest.

Let me cite an instance in support of my statement that the securing of all the right conditions does not obviate the danger.

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A very exclusive circle of sitters had been trying for some time to secure a genuine and complete materialisation. Repeatedly at their séances an earth-bound spirit interfered to spoil the séance. Acting on the principle that 'like attracts like,' three of the circle decided that there was one person amongst the party of sitters who was probably the attraction for the *poltergeist*. They decided to exclude this gentleman from their next sitting. The gentleman took the huff, but stayed away. His angry resentment at being excluded from the very special attempt at complete materialisation, where everything had been done to secure the best conditions, resulted in pandemonium and in something very near disaster to those present. 'How the medium did not lose her reason, I don't know. Luckily I had sufficient presence of mind to ask the earthbound spirit how he came to be present. He told me that after the Major went away, angry at his exclusion, he formed a circle of his own at which the particular evil spirit manifested, as usual; whereupon the Major told him to go along and spoil the test séance. *It was like hell itself let loose!*'

That story was told to me by Miss Felicia Scatcherd in the presence of the late Mr. David Gow, in the office of *Light*.

If such be the risks run by educated and expert Spiritualists, what must not the danger be for the less educated and less expert, and for those whose minds are unbalanced by grief?

These latter, above all, should avoid the séance-room, be it public or private. One after another the more responsible Spiritualists and psychical researchers issue their warnings against this dabbling with the occult.

Sir Oliver Lodge warned 'bereaved persons' against 'getting communications' from the spirit world. He also issued a strong 'word of warning to those who find that they possess any unusual power in the psychic direction' (*Raymond*, p. 382). On another page (225) he said: 'To give up your own judgment and depend solely on adventitious aid is a grave blunder, and may in the long run have *disastrous* consequences.'

'It may be asked,' he wrote further on, 'do I recommend all bereaved persons to devote the time and attention which I have done to getting communications and recording them? *Most certainly I do not*' (p. 342).

In his 'Foreword' to *Leaves from a Psychist's Case-Book* (p. 15), Mr. Harry Price writes: 'A final warning: Unless a person is

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very evenly balanced, is healthy in mind and body, and possesses a keen, discriminating judgment, he should leave spiritualism and psychical research severely alone.'

Dennis H. Bradley, in . . . *And After* (p. 396), also issued his warning: 'In psychics, the great unscientifically-minded mass, who have made a few trifling and indiscriminate experiments, *expose themselves to the dangers of obsession.*'

Mr. Harry Boddington in his 'Advice to Mediums who are developing' (*Psychic News*, January 6, 1934), warns his readers against allowing 'spirit control,' which, he adds, 'should be resisted unless experienced friends are present. . . . Nearly all get indefinable sensations akin to incipient control.' Mr. Price relates how, during a sitting with Stella, the 'electric girl,' 'Professor Julian Huxley deliberately relaxed and nearly went into a trance state.'

Mr. Boddington adds: 'Remember in addition (to the headaches, etc.) you will sense more acutely the thoughts and feelings of spirit people who will do their best to impress you. *These are not always pleasant*, and may perhaps cling to you in a somewhat embarrassing fashion.' He goes on to warn developing mediums that spirits 'throng round' them in response to their request. Some of these are 'drifters in spirit life who are not fully conscious that they no longer occupy a physical body. Their uppermost thoughts will be that they are *very, very ill*, and it is quite possible for sensitives to catch this thought. . . .

'Cases of *nervous prostration* may often be traced to this interaction of soul upon soul.'

Sixty-five years ago Stainton Moses gave advice on 'The Forming of a Circle,' in which warnings are contained almost identical with those of Mr. Boddington. He wrote: 'Should an attempt be made to entrance the medium, or to manifest by any violent methods, ask that the attempt may be deferred till you can secure the presence of some experienced Spiritualist. If this request is not heeded, discontinue the sitting. The process of developing a trance medium is one that might disconcert an inexperienced enquirer.'

Thus it would seem that during a period of over half a century, from the days of Stainton Moses to those of Mr. Harry Boddington, despite Sir William Barrett's wishful prophecy of progress in the means of spirit-communication, the same dangers and difficulties exist for the enquirer. One wonders how many enquirers during that period have paid the penalty, Pandora-like,

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because they tried to develop mediumship without knowing what precautions should be taken.

So there you have it as an equation :

Psychical Research + Hymns = Spiritualism.

And that, with its attendant lying, fraud, trickery, impostures, ectoplasmic parrots and dangers, is offered to us by many of its adherents as a Religion !

II

We may ask : Why all this sneering and contempt and hatred for the Catholic Church almost exclusively ? Why all these expressions of enmity and disparagement such as ' the Catholic monopoly of miracles,' ' the infernal band of dominating Catholic priesthood,' and the like ? There are three reasons for it : first, because the Catholic Church is so utterly and uncompromisingly opposed to Spiritualism ; secondly, because these contemptuous critics are ignorant of Catholic doctrine ; and thirdly, because of a really devilish hatred of Catholic Christianity.

With regard to the first, Professor Joad writes : ' I infer that the ordinary religious conception of the universe is unfavourable to the spiritualist hypothesis, and it is not without interest to note that most religious organisations condemn the performances of the séance room with as much definiteness as in the twentieth century they permit themselves to condemn anything, the Catholics, *as usual*, providing an exception to the prevailing anæmia of religious conviction by downright denunciation of intercourse with what they do not hesitate to call evil spirits and even demons and devils ' (*Guide to Modern Thought*, pp. 147-8).

Others attack Catholicism out of the abundance of their ignorance. When Mr. Oaten, forgetting the elaborate ceremonial of lodge meetings, or of a presentation at Court, criticises ' the Vestments, the Postures, the swinging of the Censer, and various other artistic but useless forms of genuflection at a Roman Catholic service,' he betrays his ignorance of the meaning and symbolism of the ceremonial ; he fails to see why, if *débutantes* must wear three feathers in their hair, learn how to bow and curtsy, and how to walk backwards from the Royal Presence after presentation, Catholic ceremonial should not be as particular when it is all directed to Him Whom we believe to be the King of Kings. Few

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people are ignorant, I fancy, of the 'Posturings' at a lodge initiation ceremony, or of the abbreviated 'vestments' of apron and sash, for which a symbolism is claimed. If we may excuse the editor of *The Two Worlds* for his ignorance concerning the symbolism of Catholic ceremonial we cannot excuse his ignorance when he states that the Christian heaven is 'based upon the tales of the Arabian Nights' (*The Two Worlds*, Feb. 6, 1931).

The general impression one gets from reading Spiritualists' attacks on the Catholic Church is that the bulk of their ideas of Catholicism are derived from the denunciations of hot-gospellers and ill-informed revivalist preachers, whose sole sources of information seem to be Fox's *Book of Martyrs*, *Maria Monk*, and the publications of the Rationalist Tract Association.

Even Dr. J. M. Peebles betrayed his ignorance of things Catholic. In his *Demonism of the Ages* he describes a vision (†) that was seen by a medium whose services he frequently sought. His report, which betrays not only ignorance but also his credulity, is given very solemnly :

'A man is seen coming down the mountain side. He approaches the cloud and delivers a poetical address on the subject of spiritual unfoldment, making use of the flower as an illustration. *His head is shaven and he is in the garb of a friar*, a long gray gown with a *corded belt* at the waist. After he has finished his address, we ask him if he is a member of any ecclesiastical order. He answers, "The Society of Jesus ; but, no longer." Adding, "Blame no one."

Thus the Rev. Dr. Peebles, a minister, a Doctor of Medicine, a Master of Arts, and a very widely travelled man. Despite his travelling and his attainments he swallows the tale of a medium that Jesuits have shaven heads, wear gray gowns and corded belts, and are friars. I doubt if the reverend Fathers of the Society of Jesus, at Farm Street, would be able to recognise any of their *confrères* in such attire. As a test for identity the detailed description is a complete flop ; yet, owing to his ignorance of things Catholic, it satisfied Dr. Peebles . . . and he, with his eighty years of devotion to Spiritualism, was a really outstanding personage in the movement.

As for the third explanation, that of hatred of everything Catholic, it is evidenced by the blasphemy of the atheistic A. J. Smyth ; by the obscene blasphemies of M. le Chevalier le Clément de St. Marcq, and by the whole 'Red Catechism' tone of the *Lyceum Manual* issued by the British Spiritualists' Lyceum Union.

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My questioner may say: 'You blame Spiritualist societies for sponsoring fraudulent mediums; you blame the Spiritualist press; you blame mediums wholesale; you condemn the whole movement as of the devil. Well, what has the Catholic Church to offer in the place of Spiritualism?'

The Catholic Church offers what Augustine Birrell so aptly and truly described as 'a neat assortment of coherent, interdependent, logical opinions.' She has more than that to offer. It is not 'opinions' merely that she offers: it is fixed, defined, unshakeable Truth; and the consequent spiritual aids of universal prayers and the sacraments.

The foundation of Catholic Faith is, in the first place, human reason. The Apostle tells us to give to God our 'reasonable service.' Ours is not a blind surrender of our judgment to the alleged spirit-message from an unidentifiable scalp-hunting Red Indian. It is a faith backed by reason. We argue as follows:

For the Christian the first consideration is the question of the existence of God, because religion, in the accepted and genuine sense of the word, means nothing else but the scheme of man's relationship towards God, that is, the service of the creature to his Creator.

In order, then, to have any foundation for religion in its true sense we must be convinced of the existence of God, and that God may be the object of religion. He must be a God with Whom it is possible to enter into some kind of personal communication.

Moreover, God as God must be supreme and all-powerful; otherwise there would be some other power to which higher consideration would be due than that which is due to God. We could not pay divine honours to a God of limited powers—for a God of limited powers is, from a Christian point of view, a contradiction in terms.

What then must be our attitude towards Him?

To answer that question I propose to analyse the working of the mind of a Christian with regard to his religious standpoint. Starting as an enquirer from the point of view of reason and accepting the various arguments of reason for the existence of the Supreme Being, God Almighty, viz., the argument from Design in the universe; the argument from Cause and Effect; the teleological argument, that there is a purpose for all things; the arguments, from conscience, from motion, and so on—we reason out his position thus—

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A man says to himself: I exist. God made me. I have certain qualities of health and strength; certain powers of sensation, hearing, sight, taste, smell, and touch; I have certain instincts of self-preservation and the like.

But my experience tells me that the brute animal world around me has similar powers of sensation, keener, perhaps, than mine; it, too, has similar instincts of self-preservation. Yet, on reflection, I cannot but be convinced that I am, in the true sense of the word, superior to any member of the brute creation: I possess powers that they have not, intellectual powers of memory, understanding and will. My memory is not a mere record of sensations, like that of the dog, for instance; it is a memory of far higher attainments; it records a thousand and one things that are the object of my intellect—and my intellect deals with the consideration not of material things only, of sense-impressions, but with abstract ideas, such as truth, justice, equity, goodness; it deals with scientific truths, with mathematical propositions, with ethical principles—and my memory can record all the workings of my intellect and will with regard to these abstract thoughts: consideration, comparison, selection, judgment and choice.

I have, then, something that is not possessed by any of the brute creation. I call that something my Soul. It is a rational soul, gifted with the powers of memory, understanding and will.

These gifts of health and strength, these powers of sensation, my great instincts, my intellectual abilities, I know are given to me by my Creator.

What then?

I get a dog. The dog learns to look upon me as its master. It grows to recognise, in a way, that it owes me a return for my care of it and so it demonstrates its affection by wagging its tail at my approach, by trying to lick my hands, by barking its satisfaction. It does more: it attempts to render me a service by warning me of the presence of possibly unwelcome strangers, and it learns to be obedient to my commands. All for what? Because I feed it and house it and care for it.

But my Creator has done more for me than I could do for any animal. He has given me all I possess. By His favour I am what I am as regards goodness and indifferent things: charitableness, patience, prosperity, intellectual attainments. Only the bad in me is my own. Shall I then be less grateful to Him than a dog is to its master?

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FREE IN THOUGHT

Yet what can I do by way of return? All I have He has given me—my health, my strength, my possessions. He has no need of these. Can I, then, give Him anything He would appreciate? Is there anything I possess that I can refuse Him and that He will not take from me by force? Yes, there is: the use of those two highest natural gifts He has given me of reason and of will; the service of these He will not compel me to give. These are the things He would appreciate, because my will is free and He will not constrain it; my intellect, too, is free, and He will not force it.

If it is the service of these faculties that I am to offer, how am I to do it? Has He at any time made known to man that in the service of the intellect and will lies the key to the worship of the Creator? Is it possible for Him to have ever made known in what particular way these two powers should be used to honour Him? Would such a revelation be of any use? Would it be possible? Is it necessary?

For the Christian the answer to all three questions is: Yes. Revelation is useful, possible and necessary. It is *useful* because of the existence of mysteries in the truths of religion—and by a mystery is meant a hidden truth, the knowledge and understanding of which we cannot of ourselves attain. There are the truths which are a mystery solely because their existence is not known; and there are truths which remain mysteries, as far as understanding them goes, even when their existence is known.

MYSTERIES

But the question of mysteries need not disturb us. Natural reasoning from our daily experience proves that there is much in the world around us that we cannot understand—visible, created and finite changes that are a mystery to us; much more may we expect to find mysteries when we come to deal with the invisible and infinite. And if human reason, despite the accumulated knowledge of thousands of years' study, of progress and invention, is utterly mystified with regard to objects of sensation whose existence it knows, how much less is it capable of understanding divine, supra-sensible things?

The problems of sleep and dreams and growth still puzzle us;

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the nature of electricity, light, sound and magnetism has yet to be discovered.

The revelation of mysteries by God leads to a sublimer idea of Him and to a more perfect knowledge of Him. It urges the intellect to seek to know more about Him. Moreover, it is *necessary*, not only because certain truths being mysteries could not otherwise be believed in, but also because in order to know all the truths of the strictly moral order divine help and revelation is necessary for man. History amply testifies to the fact that despite earnest and deep study, men ignorant of divine revelation were also for centuries ignorant of the most primary moral and social truths.

Their incredible forgetfulness of their last end and destiny and of their duties to their fellowmen, shows that divine revelation is necessary in order to bring man to a right knowledge of his end and duties.

Every great religious system makes some claim to be God-revealed. Each system calls for some form of faith and obedience.

But how am I to tell which of all the various religious beliefs of importance is the one my Creator wishes me to embrace? Many differ so fundamentally in dogmatic and in moral teaching.

We find polytheism as opposed to monotheism; polygamy as opposed to monogamy; denial of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity as opposed to belief in the three Persons in one God; denial of the divinity of Christ as opposed to belief in His divinity; and so on, and so on.

Evidently all these contradictory beliefs cannot be divinely revealed. God, as the God of truth, cannot be the author of contradictory revelations.

Is there any means, then, of recognising the genuine Revelation of Almighty God?

There must be. He must have made known what truths are to be believed (the service of the intellect or reason), and what commands are to be obeyed (the service of the will), *and how these truths and commandments* are to be recognised *as coming from Him*. There must be some hall-mark, test, criterion—call it what you will—that stamps or indicates the Revelation as divine.

God as the Father and Creator of ALL human beings—black or white or yellow or red—must wish all His children to serve Him in truth. Hence this Revelation is meant for all men, for the millions who cannot read as well as for the keenest intellects that even modern times have produced; and so the test of the genuineness of the divine origin of the Revelation must be one that is of

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equally compelling value to *all* men, since it is to be the standard of judgment for all.

What test is there that would strike all men equally forcibly ?

There is the test of MIRACLES.

What is a 'miracle' ?

I know that Spiritualists talk about the 'miracles of the séance-room,' I know they talk contemptuously of 'the Church's monopoly of miracles'; but in the question of miracles we are dealing with *Theology*; and just as the scientist, be he a physicist or mathematician or medical man, resents the theologian interpreting the terms of scientific theories or formulae in any but those of Science, so the theologian claims the right to have his definitions interpreted in a theological sense; the more so since the theologian has *centuries* of backing for his definitions, whereas the scientist is constantly changing his theories and hypotheses. As Professor Joad says in his *Guide to Modern Thought*, Science has a new theory of the atom at the rate of one every four or five years.

Well, what does Catholic Theology give as an accurate definition of a miracle ? It defines a miracle as : 'Opus sensibile, divinitus factum, praeter ordinem communiter servatum in rebus'—i.e. a sensible sign, meaning one that can be observed by the senses (hearing, sight); worked by Almighty God; and beyond the ordinary powers of nature.

There are three elements in that definition, and they are *all* important : (1) a sensible sign or operation; (2) performed by God; and (3) having an extraordinary *rareness* of character.

1. Men differ very considerably in intellectual attainments; but the most unskilled labourer can, as a rule, trust the evidence of his senses as reliably as can a professor of science. In a court of law a witness does not need to be a graduate of the University of Cambridge in order to testify as to who was to blame in the case of a street motor accident. The testimony of a casual labourer is as good as that of a doctor with regard to what both have actually witnessed.

2. It must be worked by God—because it has to give the hallmark of its divine origin; as though Almighty God was underlining, so to speak, the doctrines in favour of which the miracle is performed.

3. It must be of an extraordinary character—in order to arrest attention and impress the beholder . . . and make him think.

As an example—taking the New Testament merely, for the time being, as an historical document—we have the account of the

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raising of Lazarus to life. There were present on that occasion people of every class of life and of varying degrees of intellectual attainment, from the hired mourners to the priests from the temple of Jerusalem. All knew that Lazarus had been buried four days. All heard Christ's prayer to God, His Father—'I give Thee thanks that Thou hast heard me.' All heard Christ indicate the *purpose* of what He was about to do : 'because of the people who stand about have I said it'—*i.e.* addressed God in heaven, that they might recognise it *as the work of God*—and, secondly, 'that they may believe that Thou hast sent Me.'

All saw the covering of the tomb removed. All heard the command : 'Lazarus, come forth.' All saw him 'that had been dead come forth.'

In the face of that classic example of a miracle, can anyone find fault with the Catholic definition I have given ?

In that light, can the phenomena of psychical research or of Spiritualism be called miracles ? If miracles were to occur every day and at any hour one wanted they would cease to be miracles. The condition '*praeter ordinem communiter servatum in rebus*' would be absent. They fulfil the condition of '*sensible signs*,' but there is no indication that they are the work of God ('*divinitus factum*') ; it is only Auntie Maggie, or Silver Birch, or Ivy.

But if I can find a religion that is backed up by such wonders as can be *strictly* called miracles, then I have proof positive that *my Creator approves of that religion* ; since God, who is Truth itself, cannot lend Himself to support falsehood.

I apply this test to the various religious systems, and I discover that only in Judaism and in Christianity do I find real miracles worked in support of religious teaching. I discover, too, that Judaism was only a preparation for Christianity ; that a Saviour was promised (Messiah) Who would fulfil all things. I find, too, that the reaction at His coming was similar to that of the people who witnessed the raising of Lazarus from the tomb—'many believed in Him,' but others, 'because He worked many miracles,' set about to accomplish the destruction of both Himself and His Church.

Moreover, I find that once Christ came—the preparation by Judaism having been completed—no further miracles were worked in favour of Judaism, but only for Christianity. Nor do I find that the Jews claim that God worked miracles for them since the coming of Christ.

This fact leads me to study the Christian Sacred Scriptures,

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which combine the Hebrew Revelation with their own Revelation of Christ.

Convinced that in these two sets of Books I have the Revelation of God, the question arises what ought to be the attitude of a man to this revealed truth?

The answer is: FAITH—that is: a firm, intellectual assent to revealed truth on the authority of God Who reveals it.

The very prophecies of the Old (or Jewish) Testament were miracles. Their fulfilment evidences their truth. Hence I accept the divine origin of both the Old and the New Testaments: I accept the Bible as divinely inspired.

Now the New Testament presents me with not only the claim of Jesus Christ to be God, it gives me proof of that claim in His Resurrection from the dead. THAT is *the* truth, the indisputable FACT, which was preached by the Apostles to both Jew and Gentile.

At the election of the apostle who was to take the place of the traitor Judas one of the chief qualifications for selection was the ability of being able to testify to the fact of Christ's Resurrection. That was indicated as being the burden of apostolic preaching. Jesus Himself had said in His address of farewell: 'These are the words that I spoke to you while I was yet with you, and all things must needs be fulfilled which are written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning Me.

'Then He opened their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures. And He said to them: 'Thus it is written,' and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, *and to rise again from the dead the third day . . . and you are witnesses of these things*' (St. Luke xxiv).

And so we find St. Peter addressing his small congregation of one hundred and twenty persons, in the upper room, on the first Whit Sunday, saying: 'Wherefore of these men who have companied with us, all the time that the Lord Jesus came in and went out among us, beginning from the baptism of John until the day wherein He was taken up from us, *one of these must be made a witness with us of His Resurrection*' (Acts i, 22).

This witnessing to the fact of the Resurrection of Jesus from the dead was emphasised in order to drive home the proof and truth of His *Divinity*—that Christ was God.

That being so I read my New Testament once more to consider and study it, not now merely as an *historic* document but as the Revelation of God. In the light of what my reasoning has led me to believe as to the divinity of Christ all in His life and teaching takes on a new aspect; *it has a new value*. His authority to teach

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and to command is no longer that of a prophet merely, a messenger from God ; no, it is the authority of God ; it is God Himself Who speaks. In the Old Testament the prophets, speaking under the inspiration of God, as the spokesmen of God, said : ' Thus saith the Lord.' But not so Christ ; He uses a totally different form of words ; He declares : ' I say to you . . . ' ; ' It was said to you of old . . . , but I say to you . . . ' ; ' Amen, amen, I say to you . . . ' He claims, what was blasphemy to the Jews, to be ' Lord of the Sabbath ' ; He claims to have existed before Abraham was born ; He declares : ' I and the Father are one.'

Even the uneducated, the common people, recognised the note : ' And the people heard Him gladly, because He spoke as one having authority.' It was the authority of His Godhead.

I note also now, with a new significance, that one great complaint He had against the *leaders* of the Jews especially was their refusal to believe in His teaching—their want of FAITH. He called them ' an incredulous generation.' He declared their unbelief a sin : ' If I had not done among them the works that no other man hath done, they would have no sin ; but now they have no excuse for their sin.'

I see, further, that this Divine Teacher *set up a Church to perpetuate His teaching* ; that He appointed leaders and teachers to speak in His name, and with His authority : ' All power is given to Me in heaven and on earth, therefore go ye and teach all things that I have commanded you.' He promises, moreover, that in their preaching and teaching they shall be guarded and guided by the Holy Spirit of God, and that He would be with them all days, even to the consummation of the world.

Christ, then, Who is God, founded that Church, gave it authority to speak in His name, and promised it indefectibility. What else can I reasonably do but accept its teaching with FAITH ?

But my trouble is that there are so many Churches and sects teaching contradictory doctrines and opposed one to the other, some believing in the Divinity of Christ, others denying it ; some holding a sacramental system, others rejecting all sacraments ; some insisting on the rite of Baptism, others holding Baptism of no account—and yet all claim to represent the true Church of Christ. How am I to tell which *really* is that Church ?

Again I use my reasoning powers and I ask myself : *What characteristics, or notes, would I expect to find in the Church of Christ ?*

To begin with I would expect to be able to trace an unbroken

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line of AUTHORITY to *rule*, and to *teach*, and to *hand on* the powers which Christ conferred on the Apostles, and to do so as easily as I can trace the authority of our present king to sit on the throne of England to-day. The Church of Christ must hold to-day the doctrines and traditions of the Apostles ; she must derive her Orders and her Mission from them.

Jesus Christ, as I have seen, is God-Incarnate ; I would expect, then, to see the fulfilment of His prayer at the Last Supper. That prayer was concerned almost entirely with Faith and UNITY, a unity not amongst the Apostles only but a unity of 'all who through their teaching shall believe in Me.' It was to be a unity of a supernatural character : nations might change their form of government from monarchism to republicanism or to totalitarianism ; politicians might alter their views from Conservatism to Liberalism or Communism ; there might be fashions in art and music and literature ; scientists might change their theories on life and matter repeatedly—but the Unity for which Christ prayed, a Unity of *Faith and Worship and Allegiance*, was to be one that would astonish the world : 'That they may be one, as Thou, Father, in Me and I in Thee, *that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me.*'

And since Christ came to 'fulfil the Law,' that is, to call all men to perfection, I would expect to find His Church teaching a holy doctrine, and providing the means to become holy to all her children. Further, I would look to see that *in every age* there would be many who answering that call would, like the Apostles, 'leave father and mother and wife and children and land' to follow Him. In short I should expect to find a long succession of men and women who had 'left *all things*' to practise that heroic holiness which produces SAINTS.

Lastly, since Christ gave the command to 'teach *all* nations *all* that I have commanded you,' I would look for the attempt to do so to begin at once after His departure and to continue to the present time.

I then apply these NOTES or characteristics to the various religious organisations which claim to represent the Church of Christ, and I find that in none of them are all the four essential notes realised, *except in the Roman Catholic Church.*

So I sum up the situation at the bar of *reason*, and I say :

God wants me to serve Him in His way ;

He has made that way known to me through Jesus Christ ; I have the certainty of that through the evidence of miracles ;

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Only one Church to-day can properly claim to be so supported by God ; and

That Church possesses *all* the essential characteristics which I would look for in the true Church of Christ—Apostolicity, Unity, Sanctity, Catholicity ;

That Church has the Authority of Christ Himself ; and Jesus Christ is God ;

As God He commanded that Church to preach and teach in His name : ‘ *All power is given to Me in heaven and on earth, THEREFORE go ye and preach all things that I have commanded you.*’ He promised to His Church the guidance of the Holy Ghost whom He calls ‘ the Spirit of Truth ’ ; lastly, He promised that that Church would never fail, because He would be with it ‘ all days, even to the consummation of the world.’

What that Church asks of me is what Christ asked of all to whom He spoke—FAITH. It is not *faith* in the sense of mere confidence or trust, but faith as an *intellectual assent to revealed truth*. It is to lead me to say : ‘ I believe.’

M. le^e Chevalier le Clément de St. Marcq and other Spiritualists may sneer at faith as ‘ that little night-light so precious to our ancestors in days gone by,’ but neither St. Marcq nor any other Spiritualist with their questionable ‘ Silver Birches ’ and ‘ Red Clouds ’ can supplant the authority and trustworthiness of God Who is Truth Itself.

Using my powers of reason I see that Christianity is a *fact*. I do not need to be a profound philosopher nor a very learned historian to see what it has done for the elevation of womanhood ; for education ; for art and music and architecture ; for science even—but I do fail to see *one single thing* that Spiritualism has done to provide real inspiration for anything.

Spiritualism may claim the ringing of bells, whether on Christmas trees or not, and the movement of trumpets (5/6—or luminous 7/6) as miracles ; it may grant diplomas to mediums *after* they have been detected in fraud ; it may concern itself with the length of meals and the delicacy of fabrics to be had in the Summer Land ; it may try to prove that psychical experiments and hymns = *ersatz* religion, but—it has NEVER PLACED GOD FIRST.

Let me end by quoting the following passage from the writing of an agnostic.

‘ If, on the other hand, we adopt the kind of hypothesis with regard to the nature of the universe which Christianity requires,

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the phenomena of spiritualism become unintelligible. That the universe may be the creation of an omnipotent, personal deity is conceivable; that the human spirit is immortal and survives the destruction of the body is also conceivable. Given these two premises, we may further suppose either that God permits us to know the fact of immortality, or for reasons of His own withholds the knowledge. But that He should allow it neither to be known nor not to be known, but to be suspected merely, the suspicion being founded upon equivocal phenomena occurring in the dim light and doubtful atmosphere of the séance room, is to me utterly inconceivable. The atmosphere of the laboratory is clear and obvious; it is an atmosphere favourable to the discovery of concrete fact. The atmosphere of the cathedral is equally known, and, at its best, equally respect-worthy; it fosters faith, encourages contemplation and sharpens the vision of spiritual truth. But the séance room with its all too close affinity to the alchemy and witchcraft of the past, its longing for a sign and its crude appeal to the appetite for thrills and the love of the marvellous, is poles asunder from either of these, and it is, to say the least of it, unlikely that a benevolent creator should go out of his way to choose it as a medium for conveying to his creatures profound truths in regard to the nature and future of the human soul' (*Guide to Modern Thought*, p. 147).

That is not an *a priori* argument; it is a reasoned judgment from a better understanding of the nature of God than Spiritualists seem to possess.

All Catholics can accept that view or argument of Professor Joad.

Mr. E. W. Wallis, a former editor of *Light*, declared at the Geneva Congress: 'Spiritualism is the highest form of Protestantism.' That's as may be; but my verdict coincides with that of M. Philippe, who ended his address to the same Congress: 'I conclude, with all my energy: No, Spiritualism *is not*; no, Spiritualism *never shall be*; no, Spiritualism *ought not to be* a religion!'

And that emphatic declaration, uttered in the presence of representative Spiritualists from all over the world, was followed by 'loud applause' (vifs applaudissements).

